In September 2007, Jan Jones from Weatherford, TX, and who, with her husband, has had a career over the last 35 years as a designer and homebuilder, contacted the Harlingen Public Library. An inquiry was made concerning a house built by Jones's great-grandparents in Harlingen about 1918 to 1920. A photograph of the house was enclosed in the letter.

It was revealed that James J. Hand had settled in the late 1860s on a Stephens County ranch after having been a trail rider with the famed cattlemen Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving of Weatherford. From online sources we learn that "Oliver Loving (December 4, 1812 – September 25, 1867) was a cattle rancher and pioneer of the cattle drive who with Charles Goodnight developed the Goodnight-Loving Trail. Loving County, the smallest county in the United States in population, is named in his honor. Charles Goodnight (March 5, 1836 – December 12, 1929) was a cattle rancher in the American West, perhaps the best known rancher in Texas. Goodnight was born in Macoupin County, Ill. He moved his family to Milam County, Texas, in 1845 with his stepbrother John Sheek, taking a herd of cattle from the Brazos River to the Keechi Valley, Palo Pinto, Texas. He is sometimes known as the "father of the Texas Panhandle." Essayist and historian J. Frank Dobie said that Goodnight "approached greatness more nearly than any other cowman of history."

Goodnight also served as a guide to the Texas Rangers. He participated in the 1860 raid that retrieved Indian chief Quanah Parker's mother from the Comanches. The John Ford-John Wayne epic "The Searchers" was based on the Elm Creek Raid and subsequent events, wherein Goodnight played a major role.

In 1867, Charles Goodnight met the famous cattle drover Oliver Loving. Loving had been driving cattle for years before he met Goodnight. A former Confederate soldier, he was a religious family man with nine children. At the time the two met, Loving was 24 years older than Charles Goodnight, but the two men hit it off instantly and became partners in the cattle business."

Goodnight and Loving were intending to drive cattle to Colorado, but upon arriving in Fort Sumner, New Mexico sold the cattle there to the Federal Government. They would be used there to feed the Navaho and Mescalero Apache who had been interned nearby in Bosque Redondo in a disastrous effort to transform them to an agrarian culture. After securing their surrender, famed frontiersman and scout Col. Kit Carson had led them there on an infamous long march.

Loving was wounded by Comanches and later refused to have his infected arm amputated. Gangrene set in and he died, but not before securing a promise from his partner Goodnight that his body would be returned to Weatherford. It was.

Had he lived into the late 20th Century, James Hand would have been amazed to learn of the extremely popular treatment that the events in the lives of his bosses, Loving and Goodnight, provided for the fictionalized "Lonesome Dove." A young Hand obviously had numerous adventures himself while driving cattle on the trail. That he would later have a Harlingen connection is amazing.
Then 60 years of age when the 1910 US Census was compiled, Hand and his 42-year old wife Emma had nine children (six girls and three boys) ranging in age from two to 21. 
When the oil speculation and shenanigans in the Ranger, Texas area became too much for his likings, Hand and his wife Emma came to Harlingen where they settled. The 1920 census shows most of the children have moved on, but still with them are Fannie (26), James Roy (18), Willis W. (15), and Emma Lee (12). Initially the Hands had eleven children, five boys and six girls. One boy died at age three. Another son, about 21 or 22, died of cancer while attending a college in Abilene. Son Jesse, noted below, died of typhoid, contacted apparently from swimming in a Harlingen pool.

An abstract indicates that they purchased property described as the Old Snavely Place, 23 acre of Farm Blocks 11 and 12, Survey 36, Cameron County. This was likely sold to them by Lon C. Hill's Harlingen Land and Water Improvement Company, for Hill had purchased Survey 36 years before. An examination of an old map shows these parcels to be what is now on North 1st Street at Austin Avenue. The parcels straddled the Zavala lateral canal which has since been placed underground where it traverses North 1st Street. The Hands, who were interested in farming, also purchased the east part of Block 27 in the Lon C. Hill Subdivision of Survey 36. This is currently a parcel immediately south of the 77/83 Expressway frontage road between Iowa and Louisiana Streets. The Hands are thought to have planted citrus on this parcel that it now occupied by commercial businesses and low-cost housing.

A look at the 1930 Harlingen telephone directory compiled by November 4, 1929 lists Emma Hand, widow of James J., living at 1019 N. 1st Street. This is on the west side of the street, three blocks beyond the city's north boundary. Jones relates that the Hands first erected a one-story structure on the lot then later raised it and constructed a new ground floor. The photograph provided shows a handsome house with a hipped roof and four dormers. It, therefore, had three living floor spaces. The first and second stories had wide porches. The house is described as in the classic Alabama architectural style. Hand had left Alabama for Texas when he was about 16.

Mrs. Hand is listed as living at that location in 1939, the year she died. Both Hands are buried in the Harlingen City Cemetery. He was born 12/26/1849 and died 3/26/24 at age 74. Martha Emma Hand was born 2/3/1868 and died 10/18/39, age 71. Another Hand is buried in the Harlingen Cemetery. He is Jesse D. Hand born 9/30/99, died 12/15/19 at age 20. Mr. Hand died of pneumonia which attacked him following an accident. He was leading a horse and had the reins tightly wrapped around his hand. An automobile backfired and the noise spooked the horse that then dragged Mr. Hand some distance. 

In the 1935 directory is found a listing for J. Roy Hand and his wife Norma. He is into the produce business, and they live at 133 W. Buchanan Avenue. They have been in their home valued at $3,500 since before 1930, having been married when he was 22 and she 20. In the 1937-38 directory he is listed as a farmer and at the North 1st Street address. In the 1941 directory their address is given as 1000 N. 1st Street, and two children under 18 years of age reside with them. Roy was an avid fisherman. In 1944 Roy is employed as the floor manager for Guy Morris and Associates. This is a fruit and vegetable shipping firm. In 1948 he is listed as a shipper. Don and Jimmy Hand, his sons and noted to be students, are listed as living in an apartment at 313 E. Monroe. In 1952 Don is listed as a college student. In 1965 James (Jimmy) Hand becomes executive vice president of Tropical Savings and Loan.
The youngest child of James and Emma, daughter Emma Lee, married and divorced. Her second marriage was to Horace Hartsell. This occurred about 1936. They continued to reside in Harlingen until at least 1948. Over the years Horace was employed at Goodrich, Valley Baking Company, Rio Grande National Life Insurance Co., and then for Sears. For directories of the next nine years no record can be found of the residences at 1019, the reason being that the directory now included only Harlingen city limits subscribers and 1019 was still beyond the city limits.

About 1948 Elijah Bert Adams and his wife Ruth Eleanor purchased the house. They made it into an apartment complex. Around the year 1949 farmer Adams constructed a new edifice adjacent to and north of the old Hand home. This attractive red brick, one-story ranch style house exists today at 1019 N. 1st. Bert and Ruth then moved into it with daughter Harriet and sons Harvey and Earl.

In 1959 and 1960, Mr. Adams in addition to his farming around the Combes area was secretary of the Farmers Gin Corp. Its gin was at the corner of N. Commerce and Jefferson Avenue, Harlingen. Mr. Adams was to pass away and by 1980 his widow will have remarried one Elmer B. King, who took up residence with her in the ranch house.

In 1950 the Adams rented out the Hand place. The house was subdivided into two rental units. The directory for that year shows R. L. Schmidt, a salesman, his wife Lorraine, and one child living upstairs at 1015, the number that the Adams family was being used. This unit was apparently accessible by stairs from the rear side of the structure. A John C. Simiceck, salesman, rented 1015 downstairs.

The city was later to renumber the lot site. The Adams' new house would become 1019 while the old house was mostly 1015 and 1015 ½ but sometimes listed as 1013.

Following is a list of tenants of the Hand-Adams House over the years:

1952 At 1015 Kirby L. Townsend, his wife Louise and one child. He was an employee at The Man's Shop.

1954 through 1955 At 1015 L. W. "Jack" Cox, his wife Lois, and two youngsters. He was advertising manager for the Holsum Baking Co.

1956 At 1015 Aubrey D. Grayson, his wife Harriet, and two children. He was a truck driver.

1959 and 1960 At 1015 was Mrs. Selah Baker and one person under 18 years of age.

1961 At 1015 was Jack L. Cunningham, his wife Shirley, and three children. He was a radio announcer for KGBT TV.

1962 1015 was vacant while 1015 ½ was occupied by Frank B. Posey and his wife Mary. He operated Posey's Blueprint Co.

1965 At 1013, yet another number change by the post office and/or directory, was Darrell R. Frizell and his wife Louise. He was a farm worker, possibly for the Adams.
At 1013 ½ lived Earl B. Adams, son of Elijah Bert, and himself a farmer/rancher and his wife Dari Gail, a teacher. By 1969 they would have built a home and moved into it on HWY 107 between Combes and Santa Rosa.

1966 At a new 1013 address next door, Aubrey and Harriet Adams Grayson built a house. He was then assistant manager of the Harlingen Steam Laundry. They would one day be proprietors of Stacy Mitchell Cleaners on East Harrison.

At 1015 ½ resided Johnnie W. McAlister, who worked as an estimator for the Triangle Electric and Plumbing Company, and his wife Betsy L., who worked in the Credit Department at Sears, Roebuck & Company.

1971 At 1013 ½ Maxine Williams, a clerk for Suburban Casuals, Marilyn Williams, and a youngster.

1972 While listed in the March-compiled phone book at 1013 ½ Maxine Williams by the following March was residing on E. Washington.

It is believed that sometime in 1972 or 1973 the Hand-Adams house was demolished. The 1019 N. 1st Street ranch house was utilized by Elmer L. King and the widow he married, Ruth Eleanor Adams, until 1986. H L. Mangum was noted to be in the house in 1987. Deborah Ann Erck has been in the residence for at least the last three years.