Sam Botts

1909 was the year Sam Botts established himself in Harlingen. Born on 1/4/83 in Bottsville, TX near Gonzales in Central Texas, by 1907 he was in the ginning business for himself in Gonzales. In Harlingen he started buying cotton and selling groceries and general merchandise, the latter with J.B. Chambers, in the Lon C. Hill Building. They occupied the first floor of Harlingen's first major brick building completed in 1909. Part of the first floor was occupied by the Harlingen State Bank.

It was in late 1910 that Botts was among the signers of a petition to the state to incorporate Harlingen under the commission form of government available for cities of over 1000 population. A census had revealed that the town had a population of 1,126 people.

In 1911 the civic-minded Botts was a member of the volunteer fire fighting organization.

Botts later married Miss Geneva Tarver, who, in 1917, was a first grade teacher in town. In 1920 he became interested in the concentration, packing, and shipping of citrus fruit and vegetables and formed the Botts Produce Company of Harlingen. Other firm members were W.E. Jeffries and J.R. Barnett. By 1929 he becomes president of the Farmers Gin Company of Harlingen. This same year he was president of the Valley Mid-Winter Fair.

In November 1925 it is announced that a new gin is to be constructed at Palmetal by the People's Gin Co. Another is to go up north of Botts Produce on Commerce. Principles for the latter are C.L. Webb of Hugo, OK and T.A. Henderson of Harlingen. Botts Produce at 305 N. Commerce Street is this month to be succeeded by the Fruit Produce Exchange. By 1939 Botts is out of the produce business altogether. He then becomes manager of the Combes-Rangerville Gin.

Botts was destined to be Harlingen Mayor, 1928-36. This pioneer ginner and 33 year resident of Harlingen, who served on the city commission for 16 years, is to die in July 1942. Sam Botts, who served on the City Commission 4/19-12/28, becomes mayor in 12/28 and is in office to the end of 1936. His administration is similar to Ewing's in that it has drive, integrity, idealism, and the business know-how. He was involved in the Valley Mid-Winter Fair and chairman of the board of the First Methodist Church. It was his motion under Mayor Ewing that the city voted not to charge churches a building fee. Under him, air passenger service was established at the relatively primitive municipal airport whose location was the south end of the present-day golf course.
Julia Botts, Sam and Genieve's daughter, is living at home (622 E. Harrison) but in 1939 will become a Texas A & M College student.

1957 As Expressway 83 is widened in West Harlingen this necessitates the rearrangement of part of the municipal golf course. The south side airstrip is removed at what is now between the 7th and 13th fairways. Plans for what was to be Sam Botts Park on the very south end are discarded. Sam Botts Park was designated as such but was never developed. It was to be located at the south 74-acre tip near the vacated municipal airstrip adjacent to the municipal golf course. It lay between the Arroyo Colorado and the Harlingen Main Canal. Some of its area was taken when the golf course was redesigned; the remainder is scrub brush.

Evelyn Joyner

Eevlyn's parents are well established in the community and are able to provide her comfortably. The Italian villa style home built by W.T. Liston at 613 E. Taylor is for Oscar Nathan Joyner and his wife Anne Evelyn. The house was built in late 1925 and early 1926 for the Joyners who had come to Harlingen in 1919 from Rosdale, TX. He became the first Valley agent for the Texas Co. (Texaco) and will later own the Joyner Oil Company. The house was modeled on Boca Raton, FL homes designed by Addison Mizner, a famous architect of the day. The Joyner family owned it to the early 1980s when the new owner completely restored it. O.N. Joyner was born in Rockdale, TX on 9/1/91 and attended high school there. He married Annie E. McCalla on 7/15/13.