Decade 1930 to 1939

Developments

1930  The U.S. Census has Harlingen population at 12,124. At this point Harlingen begins to surpass its San Benito neighbor in population and economic indicators. Whereas San Benito had a 1920 population of 5,070 in 1910, it has only doubled to 10,753 by 1930. Harlingen meanwhile has leaped almost seven times from its 1920 total of 1,784.

Adams Garden tract of 12,124 acres to the west of Stuart Place commences development with brush clearing. Its initial citrus plantings and land sales are by Charles F. C. Ladd and are subsequently taken over by Sid Berly.

1/14/30  Missouri Pacific and the Southern Pacific report that over 1000 homeseekers are in the Valley this week.

6/30  Key statistics put telephone connections at 1,550, light connections at 2,330, water connections at 1,615. Postal receipts total $51,410. Assessed valuation is $9,436,051.

7/23 Harlingen leads all Valley cities in general construction with a $1,417,000 total.

1932  This is a difficult time economically for the city as well as the country. To promote growth here the Harlingen Community League is formed "For the Advancement and Continued Progress of Harlingen and the Valley." The list of individuals on its letterhead speak for their prominence. W.L. Trammel is president; Charles F.C. Ladd, vp; Joe Penry, treasurer; John T. Floore, secretary-manager; Ray V. Gillispie, traffic manager; Bishop Clements, publicity director; and on the directorate are O.P. Storm, capitalist; J.J. Burk, Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel; V.V. Pernoud, Gulf Refinery Co.; Claude Fullick, Great National Life Insurance Co.; Ned Sondock, Delta Office Supply; D.B. Traxler, real estate; W.P. Briscoe, Straus-Frank Co.; Clayton Pritchard, real estate; Henry Converse, Crane & Co.; and P.W. Baker, South Texas Lumber.

9/20/33 The Texas State Senate approves funding for the coastal route highway (HWY 96) to come south through Kenedy County.

1936  The city with 1,560 telephone connections has largest percent per capita of phones in the Valley. It also leads with greatest percent of electric light users at 1,795 meters.

2/15/37  Now (put into modern terms) the telephone directory proclaims Harlingen's population to be 10,714 with the adjacent outlying area having 5,500 more. The breakdown is 6,705 Anglos, 3,775 Latins (of whom 75% are said to speak English) and 234 Blacks.

7/11/37  There is an acute shortage of apartments and no houses available. While house construction picked up the first four months of the year building materials are scarce at present. The city's population is said to be 16,000 now and growing.

1938  Utility connections are as follows:
electric 2,760  gas 1,696  telephone 1,921  water 1,938.
As early as this year, air-minded city officials launch a program designed to stimulate interest in making Harlingen a commercial airport center. The European events of 9/40 awaken popular enthusiasm for defense of the U.S. Mayor Hugh Ramsey makes a definitive proposal to the War Department. City officials, along with Senators Tom Connally and Morris Sheppard, point to a number of factors which make Harlingen attractive for military training. This sets the stage for the start of a military air field here in late 1941.

1/29/38 The Harlingen Addition Company is incorporated.
3/6/38 A dredge in the Arroyo Colorado is progressing toward what will be the Port of Harlingen, but funds run out and the future port is never reached.

1/12/39 The telephone directory advertises Harlingen's population at 12,302. It breaks it down ethnically in the terms of the time as 7,359 Americans, 4,683 Latin-American (75% who speak English), and 260 Negroes. The greater Harlingen area population is said to be 18,300.

**Agricultural/Ranching**

1930s (early) In this period Scott V. Stambaugh operates a papaya orchard in the Adams Gardens area. Although it survives three mild freezes in one stretch it doesn't succeed in the long run.

1/15/30 Three old board members of the Cameron County Irrigation District No. 1 fail to get re-elected. They are chairman C.P. Bobo, J.B. Elmore and J.R. Grimes. H.L. Starnes and J.F. Blakeney are retained. New members are J.W. Wade, F.H. Green, J.S. Blakeney, and W.T. Bush.

A mid-January freeze with a low of 24 degrees and lower hurts 50% of the cabbage but does considerably less damage to citrus and less than was experienced in the 1926 freeze. However, freeze-susceptible crops such as tomato, beans, eggplant and pepper are wiped out. By mid-March cabbage prices spike to just under $100 a ton before quickly falling back to half that price.

1/16 Harlingen area vegetable growers need 500 laborers for the upcoming vegetable harvest and the Valley as a whole 5,000. Meanwhile the federal government is considering restriction on the import of foreign labor. Valley fruit exports hit a record at 3,668 cars.

1/31 Railroad rates for citrus transport are reduced 15%.

Texas cotton farmers, 21,000 strong, organize the Texas Farm Bureau Cotton Association in order to take advantage of federal farm board loans.

10/6 It is announced that W.T. Adams and his family have sold the Adams Tract of 9,728.5 acres to the Farm and Home Savings and Loan Association of Nevada for $1,700,000. An irrigation system for it has yet to be developed.

12/30 There is a record attendance at Harlingen's Valley Mid-Winter Fair. Part of the attraction is a presentation by a professional rodeo outfit.

In 1930 David W. Day, whose wife Lillian is a school teacher, is manager of Farm and Orchard Equipment, Inc. He is also treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce this year. By 1937 they have left the Harlingen scene.
1931 Jack Funk's father had come here in 1923 and bought 40 acres of at Stuart Place on Palm Drive. It required clearing and was then used to raise vegetables. Three years after his 1931 arrival Jack graduated Stuart Place High School along with his future wife Loyce. He worked for the Producers Gin Co. on Commerce Street in 1937, enlisted in the navy, and after the war commenced farming east of Lyford before investing in the Sebastian Cotton Gin Co. His two sons Jerry and Tommy became successful cotton and sugarcane farmers and ginners. Tommy was recognized across the country as president for some years of the National Cotton Council.

5/31 A.D. McMinn advertises himself as a Pioneer Buyer and Shipper. While he is headquartered in Harlingen he has loading facilities at Stuart Place, Rio Hondo, Santa Rosa, La Feria, Edcouch, and Donna. His specialty is Green Wrap Tomatoes.

8/31 Marion T. Gregory, his wife Ophelia and family arrive in Edcouch but found work as a welder in Harlingen to where they would move in 1934. He was eight years older than his wife who was born 10/14/1904 in Amity, AK. In a few years he would buy out the owners and form M.T. Gregory and Company, a firm that manufactured trailers and farm equipment. He would die in 1972 and she at age 102 on 12/7/06. Her identical twin sister Ouida Mitcham also lived to be over 100.

11/22/31 Baker-Potts Nursery Co. bills itself as the leading nursery company of the Valley. While most of its business involves citrus it also handles shrubs, ornamentals, avocado trees, papayas, roses, and flowers of all kinds.

9/1/33 In connection with the booming citrus business MOPAC is constructing a new $14,000 brick and tile shipping plant for the Valley Fruit Exchange. At the west end of Jackson Avenue it is adding a $4,500 second floor to its Stuart Place packing shed. Across the Valley it will expend $200,000 to handle the expected $6 million citrus crop.

9/2/33 Sixty citrus shippers agree not to sell culls, namely fruit not meeting U.S. No. 2 inspection requirements.

9/5/33 Hurricane No. 11, 1933 comes ashore north of Brownsville. It subsequently drops or damages 90% of the citrus crop in the Valley. A less severe hurricane here a month earlier had negatively impacted the cotton crop which was enjoying a 9 cent a pound return versus 5 cents for last season. While 55,000 bales were eventually harvested, growers estimated that they had lost 20,000 bales due to rainy weather late in the growing season.

1933-40 The Primera area suffers from the Great Depression and low farm prices. Businesses are reduced to one and the population drops to an estimated ten. With greater food demand upon the commencement of WWII, the population recovers to 100 in the early 1940s and in 1947 is seventy-five. Three packing sheds operate, sometimes using school children for help in the labor-short war period.

1934 This year the Snider Packing Co. is established. By 1936 it is handling 3,000 acres of peas, beans, broccoli, spinach, beets, carrots, and grapefruit.

1935 The Stuart Place Citrus Association shed burns down with a loss of $22,330 for the property and $23,134 for its contents. This year J.R. Fitzgerald, who has been in the produce business in the area since at least 1930, establishes Tri-Pak Machinery Service on N. Commerce Street. It manufactures equipment for agricultural product packing, lidding, and waxing among other things.
7/29/35  After returning from a vacation in Colorado and New Mexico with his siblings and other family members, Lon C. Hill Jr. in his capacity as vice president begins work organizing the Rio Grande Valley Citrus League.

5/36  The CCWID No.1 has as its directors F. H. Green, president; J.S. Blackney vice president; H.L. Starnes secretary and manager; with J.W. Wade and W.P. Bush directors.

9/6/36  Sam Robertson appears before the Cameron Country commissioners to appeal for the lowering of farm land valuations in an effort to alleviate financial difficulties for depressed farmers.

The Aransas Compress Company in town has processed 42,000 bales to-date and has 2,600 more to go. The Valley total of 69,000 bales is the highest in some years.

9/10/36  A tropical storm forms in the Bay of Campeche, makes landfall at Brownsville on 9/13, then moves up the Valley all the way to Del Rio. Coupled with an exceptionally wet August, the cotton harvest is negatively impacted.

11/37  When the 16th Valley Mid-Winter Fair is held in Harlingen late in the month, Fair officials are Stanley B. Crockett, president, Bob Adams, Jack King, A.L. Benoist, and D.E. Ewing, vice presidents, Hugh Ramsey, W.P. Briscoe, H.A. Swafford, S.D. Grant, R.L. Hill, directors and Sidney Kring, secretary-treasurer. Prize money totals $3,500 while admissions remain 25 and 15 cents.

By this year the city is down to four cotton gins with two more at Rangerville and one in Combes, however two major cotton oil mills are established.

This year's citrus census shows that the Harlingen area has 331,680 grapefruit trees, 119,554 orange, 1,680 tangerine, 1,723 lemon, 510 lime, and 6,031 other citrus for a total of 461,178. Pink grapefruit resulting from "sports" of Marsh Seedless and Duncan trees are coming to the forefront. The Harlingen growers have 23,497 trees of this type.

12/37  In a Monty's advertisement Adams Gardens announces that it has just put 7,000 acres on the market.

1939  Parke T. Moore, a native of Cherokee, OK, comes to the area. He will become involved in governmental agencies such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and Federal Land Bank. In 1946 he will be a founder of the Valley Co-op Oil Mill in Harlingen just prior to its construction and in 1948 become its president and general manager until his retirement in 1978. This Rotarian and First Presbyterian member will die 9/28/86 leaving his wife Mabel and two sons, Parke T. Moore, Jr. and Richard, both of San Benito.

This year the Harlingen Canal's old wooden flume across the Arroyo Colorado is replaced by a giant, buried inverted siphon.

**Government/Politics –City, County, State, National**

1/7  The Harlingen Star carries an editorial urging Congressman Garner to support a port at Harlingen rather than at Port Isabel.

1/22  The $500,000 bond issue carries 150 to 57. It will allow for the construction of a city abattoir, street paving, an 18 hole golf course, a fire substation and equipment, and improvement to city parks.
1/23 The Chamber of Commerce adopts a resolution in support of Arroyo Colorado Navigation District chair A.C. Chambers’ offer to the federal government to fund the dredging of a 9’ deep channel to the Laguna Madre and through South Padre Island if the government will then maintain it. Two days later the government comes out in favor of ports at Port Isabel and Brownsville.

1/30 The assessed value in the city is $8,456,000. The tax rate is $1.50/$100 valuation. The bonded indebtedness is $500,000.

2/22/30 For reasons not detailed police chief R.H. Johnson and also assistant chief, Cage Johnson, are suspended without pay until April 1 because of misconduct and incompetence. L.M. Chaudoin is acting chief in this period.

2/27/30 Harlingen newspaper man and election clerk, Edwin B. Williams, is indicted with other politicos "for conspiracy to injure persons in their exercise of civil rights in violation of the U.S. Civil Code." All were found not guilty.

The Harlingen Municipal Golf Course with its 18 holes costing $127,000 for land and $120,000 for construction is opened for play in February 1930. Its formal opening is in September when the $10,000 Caddy House is completed. It is located off M Street, south of Expressway 77/83. It is a par 71 course of 6,360 yards having 120 sand traps and bunkers. A city owned gravel-dirt airstrip is south of the course in a 72-acre area later designated to become Sam Botts Park but which never comes to fruition. When Expressway 83 is constructed, the course loses some land but expands to the south into a 27-hole course.

6/21/30 The Port Bill passes in the U.S. Congress. $2,158,000 are appropriated for a Valley Deep Water Port and a survey to extend the intra-coastal waterway from Corpus Christi to Port Isabel, the Sabine Pass, Texas to Corpus Christi portion having been completed. The bill also contains a provision for a survey of a waterway from Harlingen to the Gulf by way of the Arroyo Colorado, Laguna Madre, and a cut across Padre Island or such route as may be deemed advisable. A nine foot deep channel is now probable. The Arroyo Navigation District has $500,000 in the bonds which were voted on and then sold about two years ago. It is now proposed to loan the Federal Government this money to be utilized on the construction of a nine foot deep channel from the mouth of the Arroyo Colorado to the channel in Harlingen. It would later become part of the intra-coastal canal system when it may possibly be extended to the mouth of the Rio Grande.

1/1/31 E.W. Anglin returns to the position of Chief of Police, a name changed in 1926 from City Marshal. He shall serve from 1/7/31 until 3/1/47. Serving in the department at the time are W.H. McMinn (Uncle Mack), Wes Fonville, L.M. "Mackie" Chaudoin (who by 1933 will be a lieutenant), Cage Johnson, and Julian Villareal. All would be deceased by April 1960. Later Anglin will be replaced by a succession of men who will each serve two terms. They are Virge Lockhart, Osco Morris, and Bob Johnson. When Anglin took on the job again in 1931 the department commenced the thorough keeping of statistics and records. Anglin will again return to the position until he resigns on 3/1/46 and Captain Harold Crossett is elevated to the chief’s job. Among other things Crossett had served in the department as "burglar specialist." At his point the department has a force of 14 men and five patrol cars. Crossett will serve until 1948 at which time he reigns to take a position with the FBI office in McAllen.
The city health officer this year is Dr. Frank D. Walsworth. He has a private practice as a physician and surgeon with an office at 106 S. A Street. He and his wife, Thelma I. reside at 213 E. Madison. A graduate of the U. of Kansas Medical School in 1905, he arrived in here in 1923 and began his practice that lasted until he retired in December 1967. By 1938 he will be owner of the Harlingen Optical Company and have moved on to 1422 E. Tyler. A year later he will advertise his specialty as ear, eye, and nose operating at his office at 107 N. A Street. He dies here at age 90 on 7/24/69 leaving his wife Thelma in Houston, a son and a daughter.

1932 The neo-classical design U.S. Post Office is built on northwest corner of Van Buren and 2nd Streets. It is remodeled in 1964. It serves Harlingen for 67 years until a new facility is erected.

10/4/32 The library is officially closed by the Library Board due to the withdrawal of city funds. A membership drive is started, small city funding offered, and with volunteer help the library is opened one day a week. After the September hurricane of 1933 it is closed until 11/4.

1933 This year George Waters is serving as Police Commissioner.

8/23/33 City meets interest debts but will sell $87,000 in bank assets to avoid future defaults; also tax delinquents are being taken to court to collect past city tax debts.

3/4/33 Milton Horace West (1888-1948) begins his first term as Congressional Representative from the 15th District to take the place of resigning John Nance Garner elected as Vice President under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He will die in office on 10/28/1948.

1934 Bert Gamble is fire chief from 1934 until 1/36 when E. C. Bennett resumes the job.

1935 In this year it is State HWY 96 which comes from Corpus Christi via Riviera and Sarita to the Valley. HWY 16 joins it from Robstown through Kingsville and then goes west to Falfurrias. State HWY 4 and US 83 parallel the river from west of Zapata all the way to Brownsville.

8/11/35 Police officer Mackey Chaudoin is wounded by George Dunlap before the latter is killed. Chaudoin will later die of his injuries.

10/1/35 C.H. Hamilton, Sr. is appointed U.S. Postmaster for Harlingen. He will retire in November 1961 after 39 years with the service. In 1935 when 20 were employed the postal receipts are $50,000. At his retirement 80 are employed and postal receipts are $.5 million. Employees who worked there in 1935 and who are still with the service in 1961 are Arthur D. Purdy, assistant postmaster; A.E. Heinz, superintendent of mails; Walter Hentz, foreman; Clyde Crittenden and Herbert Hertz, clerks.

1/5/36 Fire chief Gamble releases the 1935 fire report. The department answered 101 fire calls, but only 27 developed into fires within the city limits. Most were grass fires. Total property value involved was $419,750 and content value $512,020. The Miller Corn Elevator sustained a $30,000 loss and the old cotton mill $25,000.

1936 The city has 22 miles of paved street, 47 miles of storm drains, 51 miles of water mains, and 365 acres in eight city parks. Assessed valuations stand at $7,568,290 with a
tax rate of $1.80/$100 valuation. The municipally owned golf course is valued at $73,000 and the rebuilt Municipal Auditorium at $102,000.

Congress allocates $4,800,000 for flood control to be spent $1.6 million per year over a three year period. The projects fall into the immediate Harlingen trade zone.

Having moved here in 1925, Hugh Ramsey is elected Mayor this year, then re-elected for four consecutive terms, and again to serve 1948 to 1946. His terms of office are: 12/8/36 to 12/16/46 and 12/15/48 to 12/15/50. This native of Milford, TX was born in 1894. He joined the army in 1913 and was stationed in the Valley in 1916. He served overseas with the Texas 36th Infantry Division before being discharged in 1919. He is a member of the First Baptist Church and the Rotary Club for over 24 years. In the late 30s he is owner of a furniture store bearing his name and is also a general contractor.

1936 The Harlingen Fire Department commences its Alarm Report record.

1937 The city commissioners reappoints E. C. Bennett as a fire chief in order to tie up some loose ends in the department reorganization. A. Goldammer is reappointed as building inspector and also fire marshal to replace Ralph Bledsoe. Dr. J.T. Trailer is appointed city veterinarian and Cage L. Johnson to replace E.W. Anglin as head of the city’s law enforcement body, this to occur at a later date; Arthur Klein corporate judge. Claude Liston is reappointed as manager of the Harlingen Municipal Golf Course. B.S. Mothershead, the accountant, is certified to check the city’s financial records. Dr. V.M. Bass, city health officer, was not replaced yet.

1938 Built as a cotton gin scale house this year, the small building at 822 Fair Park Blvd. will one day serve as the city's Public Service Office. It will be demolished in 2008 to make way for the construction of a new police station and city court.

1/1937 The Harlingen Fire Department recommences its Alarm Report record.

1938 V.J. Eckelkamp is appointed as the first ever city manager. The 1927 charter sets the maximum salary for this position at $7,500 a year, far above any salary a manager at the time would reasonably receive. Eckelkamp resigns effective 8/1/38. Mayor Ramsey is not open to sharing power and decisions with any city manager. It is not until 1/47 when W.P. Briscoe is appointed that the position is again filled.

1939 4/11/38 In what may have been one of the last serious attempts to divide the state as allowed when it joined the Union, a proposal to make South Texas the 49th State was aired in Harlingen and a pamphlet to that effect was issued. A brief noted the isolation of the area, and the proposal encompassed Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo and Starr Counties.
1939 With Jake Childress as fire chief, the city plays host to the State Firemen and Fire Marshals' convention. Ladies' Fire Department Auxiliary first set up in 1930 is reorganized this year and again in 1948. Some of the men who have and will work for the Harlingen Police Department from 1936 until the mid-1940s include Lawson Anglin, Andrew Goldammer, Jr., C. E. "Happy" Henderson, (Cecil) Lynn SoRell, Dan Botts, Ben Thomas, John Hollyfield, Preston Wilson, Don Abbott, and Tom L. Hutchinson.

Business/Commercial/Industry

1930 Chamber of Commerce wheels include J.F. Rodgers (the postmaster), president; L.E. Steinberg, 1st vice-president; and John T. Floore, secretary and manager. By this year two more "five and dime" stores will have opened on Jackson. They are the McClelland Stores Co. at 113-115 W. Jackson and J.G. McCrory Co. at 104 W. Jackson. The city has two banks with total deposits of $2,013,178 and resources of $2,241,685. Before this year commences widow Rose Adolph is operating the The New York Store selling dry goods. It is in an addition along Commerce Street made to the Letzerich Building. This enterprise will continue at various Jackson Street locations for 29 years. 1/10 H.R. Herren and Sam B. Willis construct a 26 x 100', $15,000 building on Van Buren near the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel for the Postal, Telegraph Cable Company. 1/12 Knapp and Company is made the Buick agent for the whole Valley. It has a showroom at 213 N. Commerce. It was formally Valley Buick Company. 1/14 The Harlingen Daily Star becomes the Valley Morning Star. It has a 3,500 paid circulation but in a 30 day campaign will guarantee advertisers an additonal 3,500 distribution through give-a-ways. 1/22 Bishop "Bish" Clements is named VMS sports editor. Formerly with the Brownsville Herald this ex-baseball player has been in the Valley for 15 years 6/27 CPL conducts an industrial survey and finds the following industries in the city: one wholesale bakery, 5 retail bakeries, 2 bottling works, 5 cotton gins, 1 cotton compress, 1 creamery, 1 concrete pipe manufacturer, 2 candy makers, 1 casket fabricator, 1 electric light company, 1 hat manufacturer, 1 iron and machine works, 2 ice plants, 1 irrigation plant, 1 laundry, 1 mattress company, 1 milk plant, 3 printing firms, 1 potato chip company, 1 planing mill, 1 awning shop, and 1 railroad shop. The largest employers of the foregoing are Valley Baking Co. with 60 people; CCWD No.1, 51 people, Harlingen Star, 48 (likely including delivery people); and the shops of the Missouri Pacific, 43. The survey also notes 11 packers of fruits and vegetables, two chemical companies, and the Valley Ice Cream Co. From January 1930, 19 new businesses in addition to the foregoing are noted. These include the Plaza Hotel which opened on A Street on March 3 and the Federal Petroleum Co. on May 1. Labor availability is put at 1,255 males and 825 females. Of these 60% are denoted to be of American nationality and 40% Mexican. (This type of breakdown is erroneous as it is more an attempt to portray ethnicity rather than nationality.) No blacks are noted. Among these, 400 are said to be skilled labor and 1,620 common labor. When approximate wages are listed there is no difference for skilled and common labor but must have been adjusted within the wage scale ranges. Wages were as follows:
American male (175) $125.00 to 150.00 per month
American female (75) 80.00 to 120.00
Mexican male (100) 100.00 to 115.00
Mexican female (50) 60.00 to 100.00
Labor unions existed for carpenters, electricians, painters, and plumbers, but membership in each was small.
A Chamber of Commerce brochure notes that the city has 400 businesses and 2,074 are employed exclusive of the school staffing.
1930 The Hollingsworth Motor Company, a Ford dealer and service agent, is operating at 220-222 West Harrison. By 1931 it has constructed the handsome art deco style building across the street at 221-225 and moved in. The it exits the business and by 1937 Knapp Chevrolet is in the premise until 1941 after which it is vacant. In later transition is used by the Holsum Bakery (1944), is vacant again, then used by Ideal Cleaners (1952), by Bebrick Auto Paint Store (1960), and was purchased by its current owners, Allie and Lois White of White Cleaners. By 1948 Holsum has moved into its new factory at 1502 W. Harrison. In 1978, the brand name of the bread becomes Buttercrust. In 1996 the factory ceases operation.
The Union Bus Lines serve Harlingen and the Valley. In 1957 it is bought out by Trailways.
F.W. Woolworth with A.E. Peoples as its manager has become established at 111 W. Jackson.
This is the year Harlingen gets its first edition of an Interstate City Directory (telephone). Montgomery, Ward is located at 121-123 North 1st Street, later moving to 115 North A as a catalogue order office, and by 1941 has closed shop entirely in Harlingen.
The Valley Baking Company Inc., which will later market bread under the Rainbo label, is in a two story building at 1025 W. Harrison. On December 8, 1930 it will have moved into a new and larger plant at 1600 W. Harrison. The new factory of 30,000 square feet cost $300,000. It features a gas-fired 75’ conveying oven, a 60’ smokestack, and employs 60. William L. Trammel, its 34-year old president and general manager, began his work career in California before coming to Texas where he struggled to succeed. In 1926 he came from Freeport to San Benito where he purchased the 25’ frontage Anderson’s Bakery. In July 1927 he organized the Valley Baking Company with $20,000 capitalization. This rose to $100,000 in 1928 and $300,000 by 1930. The brand name for the bread is Butter-Nut. Trammel will move into the same positions with the Holsum Baking Company by 1944. A.M. Jones will then become Rainbo’s v-p and general manager.
At 1st and Van Buren J.E. Tope is running the Hotel Van Buren.
Mr. and Mrs. L.G. Garcia will have been operating the first drugstore west of the railroad tracks. This is the Garcia Drug Store at 604 W. Harrison. Also involved in this enterprise are Joe Garza and Ninfa Gomez.
John W. Gardner has Gardner's Studio at 1005 W. Harrison. This photographer will do considerable publicity photographing for real estate firms in the area.
E. Hertz will have his ladies ready-to wear shop at 119 E. Jackson after initially opening at 106 s. A Street. Mrs. Blanche Fulgham is its early manager. The shop continues to operate here until it moves to 200 E. Jackson in 1940. Its doors will close by 1942.
1/24 CPL announces plans for its $100,000 cold storage plant and its intention to survey Harlingen for the need to build more cotton gins.

2/8 The new $37,000 Humble Super Service Station opens at 1st and Monroe. Leonard Smith is its manager.

2/9 Junkin Furniture moves into its new home across from the Acadia Theater on A Street. It once was the site of the old Searle Furniture store.

2/14 The VMS carries an ad for El Tiempo (the Times), a new Spanish language weekly to be published by the Recio Brothers. Miguel A Peral is editor and A.L. Longoria, advertising manager.

3/3 The Plaza Hotel its doors for business. Its rooms went from $1.50 to 3.00, and it noted a connecting coffee shop. J.V. Murphy, who also owns the Moore Hotel, built this one. Mr. & Mrs. E.H. Koller will manage the 100 room hotel.

3/9 Jones Transfer moves from 185 N. Commerce to 1006 W. Jackson. It opened a branch in Edinburg in 1926 and one in Brownsville 1929. It operates 19 trucks.

4/5 The Moore Hotel is sold to San Antonio multimillionaire J.M. Nix. The seller J.V. Murphy will continue to own the Plaza Hotel. Nix allows that the Moore will be renamed The Madison.

5/10 The Federal Petroleum Co. commences operations here.

5/29 Wealthy manufacturer and rancher of New Braunfels, Harry Landa is in town to check out his investments here. He owns the Commerce Building and the Nelson block on north A Street plus 3,000 acres of agricultural land south of the city in addition to 2,000 acres near Donna. H.A. Briscoe is his Harlingen agent.

9/17 On a three acre site Central Power and Light Company (CPL) puts into operation its cold storage plant capable of handing 100 freight cars of products such as eggs, meats, fruits, dairy, and vegetables. J.W. Sweeney will be its manager. Previously he was superintendent of car icing and the ice department for CPL in the Valley according to F.C. Ludden, Valley District Manager for CPL. Construction on the three-story reinforced concrete building with a 70' by 154' foundation started in late January 1930 after a $100,000 contract was awarded to W.A. Velten of Brownsville. In 1930 the building is just outside the city limit on the Combes Highway. That puts it now on North Commerce just north of the Fair Park Blvd. intersection. Cecil Carruth will purchase the structure by 1946 and the name is changed to Harlingen Cold Storage.

1931 Day's Drug at 123 E. Jackson comes under the proprietorship of Louise and Harry E. Day. It was formerly Sims Drug. This very popular enterprise with its luncheonette and magazine sales closes in the mid-80s and is now an antique store. Harry Day will one day be in the Historical Hall of Fame because of his civic endeavors, including leading the drive for off-street parking, being president of the C of C, RGV Pharmaceutical Assoc., United Fund, and Kiwanis. In the 30s thru 50s the Palm Hotel,119 E. Jackson, occupied the building's second and third floors with a total of 69 rooms. Current owners are Tony Ramirez and his wife June who utilize it as an antique emporium. This year Howard E. Butt purchases many of the Piggly Wiggly chain of grocery stores in the Valley.

Here also this year is John Hoskins Junkin, who works with his father Joseph in establishing a furniture business that will endure in the city for 60 years. Born in Colorado, he is to die at age 74 in the VBH on 4/7/91 leaving his wife Cornelia and three
sons. This First Baptist Church member was also a Lion, Rotarian and 33rd degree Mason. Robert W. Baxter is president of the Rio Grande National Life Insurance Co. organized in 1928 and has renamed his 9-story Baxter building to that company's name. The radio station KRGV, "the Valley Voice", is located in the top floor of the building, with its roof top garden, and has two antennae to transmit signals from its spacious studio. M.S. "Dick" Niles is president and general manager of the station. C.J. Niemann is secretary-treasurer, George Parker vice-president in charge of mechanical operations, Warren Reitz is musical director, and Mrs. Ernest Wright is staff pianist. Jack Negley, an ex-vaudevilleian, is studio director and announcer. A KRGV survey of 108 Harlingen homes visited reveals 57 radios owned or 52% of those surveyed.

It is this year that the Harlingen Star becomes the Valley Morning Star. The Valley Morning Star's plant and office is located at 118 North A Street, a site later occupied by Luby's New England Cafeteria. A small photographer's studio stands between the VMS and Junkin's Furniture to the north. The VMS is owned by the March-Fentress Group but in 1933 is sold to McHenry Tichenor, who came to the Valley from Oklahoma. Tichenor, who came to the Valley in 1930, served as an administrator for the VBH and was a member of the Elks and Rotary. It was his purchase of a radio station here from Judge Hofheinz of Houston that sent him on the road to becoming a multi-millionaire. Several years later Hubert Hudson, father of the 1930s state senator from the area, purchases the VMS along with the Brownsville Herald and McAllen Monitor. Tichenor is said to have paid $50,000 for the VMS and sold it five years later for $125,000. Soon after Hudson builds a new newspaper plant at 213 South 2nd Street and installs an efficient rotary press to supersede the flatbed one.

Red Arrow Freight Lines begins servicing a Harlingen to Houston route then adds a Harlingen to Dallas one.

Between this year and last, the Moore Hotel changes its name to the Madison.

Mrs. Lydia L. Brady returns to the area after having first been in the Valley in 1916. Born in Hopkins County in 1879 in Harlingen she opens Pauline's Hat Shop. Later the business is enlarged and renamed "Brady's Smart Shop." She retires from the mercantile business in 1943 but continues her activities in real estate, building a store on Jackson Street and owning and managing several apartment houses in the city. She is to die in Dallas after a nine month illness but only a short time in that city. This First Baptist Church member leaves behind seven children both within the Valley and in Texas. Her pallbearers are prominent Harlingen business men.

5/31 The Valley State Bank has as its officers John T. Lomax, president, B.M. Holland and Tyre H. Brown, vice presidents, D.L. Page cashier, T.C. Jeffrey and Ray Stephenson assistant cashiers, G.G. Hensen and G.W. Ralston, directors. Financial figures for it and its rival show:

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<td>Valley State Bank</td>
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<td>First National Bank of Harlingen</td>
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Thompson's Mortuary has by now opened satellite facilities in San Benito, La Feria, and Raymondville.

1931 Edward (Bert) Alcott, Jr., born 10/14/30 in Dallas, TX comes to Harlingen with his parents Edward (Ed) Elbert Alcott II and Mary Serena Lemon Alcott. His father teams with Bob Knight to purchase the Royal Crown Bottling Co. in the mid-30s. Later
they, along with their sons, Bert Alcott and Bob Knight, Jr., purchase F.J. Garrett's Nehi and 7UP bottling plant at 1201 South F Street and move into a new facility at 601 77 Sunshine Strip. Bert will team with Bob Knight, Jr. to establish Redelco Inc. in 1970. It is a major real estate developer in Harlingen in the 1970s-1990s. The real estate development corporation's first building is Luby's Cafeteria, the anchor of Village South Shopping Center. The bottling company plant on 77 Sunshine is in the 1980s transformed into the Citadel Office Building. Later they bought the Village North Shopping Center, developed the Redelco Office Center on Morgan Blvd., and built the Redelco Business Park on Loop 499. Bert was graduated by Baylor University in 1953. At age 72 on 11/30/02 he will pass away, having lived 70 years in the city. He leaves his wife of 37 years, Lori, mother Mary Alcott, son Mark Alcott and daughter Mary Ann Martin. He participated in Rotary and was a member of the First Baptist Church of Rio Hondo. The senior Alcotts will have been married 56 years when he dies in the 1980s. Mary, born 8/8/09 in Dallas TX, will pass on 9/6/04 at age 95. She and Normah Knight in 1947 developed the first art gallery in the RGV and operated it for 20 years. She was a member of the RGV Art League for 50 years and served as its president for several terms. She taught Sunday school at the First Methodist Church. Louis Martin and Gary Knight are third generation members who continue to manage Redelco.

Bert's wife Dolores (Lori) Ann Cox Alcott is to die 2/6/05 at age 72. Born in Buffalo, NY 8/7/32, she had come to Harlingen in 1950. While employed at the Harlingen National Bank she earned a BA degree from Pan American University. She owned the Baskin Robbins Ice Cream franchise store in the Village South Shopping Center and also with her husband managed their LoriMar Properties. For 30 years she was a member of the First Baptist Church of Rio Hondo. She leaves behind daughter Mary Ann Alcott Martin, son Mark Alcott, and grandchildren.

12/13/32  F.L. Flynn, chairman of the reorganization committee of the depositors of the old Valley State Bank notes that 600 of 2,800 have pledged $40,000 of the $70,000 needed to form a new bank.

Niagara Spraying and Chemical Company opens a branch at 418 N. Commerce.

6/32  The Valley Voice, a weekly paper promoting business and calling itself "The Merchant's Broadcaster" is published by the RGV News and claims readership in 14,000 homes.

8/32  The Harlingen Tribune newspaper is being published. It reports on Lon C. Hill's 70th birthday Celebration. Considerable community outpourings occur at this organized event and again the following year for the Second Annual Lon C. Hill Birthday Celebration.

1933  Boggus Motors Co. is established in Harlingen. J. Lewis Boggus' family had come to the Valley in 1917. He started as a bookkeeper at the Ford Automobile Company dealership in McAllen in 1918. This was Daniel Ford. Because of his outstanding abilities as a car salesman, he became a Mission Ford dealer in 1919, and part owner of Brownsville Patteson Motors in 1923. He moved to Harlingen in 1933 and acquired the Ford Agency from H.R. Hollingsworth completing the deal hours before the hurricane struck. After the storm the new Ford V-8 was offered. Lincoln Zephyr models came to
the agency in 1935 and Mercury in 1939, the same year Boggus acquired this franchise in Harlingen. It was in 1939 also that he started a tractor company in both Harlingen and McAllen. In 1946 Boggus separated the Valley Motor Co. selling Lincolns and Mercurys and the Boggus Motor Co. selling Fords at its new Harrison Street location. Frank Rocha was one of Valley Motors Co. original founders in 1946. In 1964 its location was 902 W. Harrison. Lewis’ son Frank was born in Brownsville and graduated from Texas A&M before seeing military duty in the Air Force as a 2nd Lt. Frank. He went on to become a major stockholder and chairman of the Texas State Bank. In addition to being chairman of the Texas Automobile Dealers Association, he won the Mister Republican award in 2004 for his work for this political party in Cameron County. The Boggus organization by the 21st Century is active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and participates in raising money for the Ronald McDonald House and the Salvation Army.

In this year Harlingen has eleven manufacturing establishments employing 117 people, excluding salaried. Their wages total $121,962. Costs of materials are $257,524 and the value of the products produced $725,389.

When prohibition ends Forrest W. Runnels founds Valley Beverage to distribute consumable alcoholic products. On 12/14/03 Gordon Hill, who has general managed 21 years for the firm, announces its sale by co-owners Neal Runnels of McAllen and Jane Clark of Harlingen. Its assets were purchased by Glazer's Wholesale Drug Co., Inc. of Dallas. Glazer is Texas' largest distributor of malts, spirits, and wines. It operates in six states and in 2002 had revenues of $1.75 million.

It is in 1933 that Day's Drug comes to occupy the first floor of 123 E. Jackson. The popular store with its luncheonette will become a gathering place for businessmen and others to exchange news.

Sometime in the years 1933 through 1936 the Rio Grande Valley Telephone Co. becomes Southwestern Bell.

8/27/33 Crown Williamette Paper Co. of Texas, a subsidiary of Crown Zellerbach opens a plant in the former Valley Fruit Exchange Building. It has a large three color press for creating tissue wrappers.

9/33 After the 1933 Hurricane destroys the rooftop Baxter Building studios of KRGV, "Kum to the Rio Grande Valley", the Weslaco Chamber of Commerce entices the radio station to move to that city where it did so in 1934 and upped its power to 1000 watts.

1934 A Maternity Hospital is established at 705 N. 1st Street. Dr. Paul R. Maxwell, who has an office on the third floor of the Rio Grande National Life Insurance Building and is listed as a physician, surgeon, and bone specialist delivers some babies at this hospital. He and his wife Leah M. had come to Harlingen in 1930. He will later move up another floor in the building and by 1950 start an office in the McClendon Building. His practicing will end around 1953. The Maternity Hospital will move to 1117 W. Harrison by 1937 and be run by Dr. Martin Bernfield, who may also work in the adjacent Valley Clinic at 1115 W. Harrison. By 1939 both facilities are gone.

In this same year Harvey L. Richards, Sr. and his brother, John W. Richards, purchase the controlling interest in Hygeia Milk Products Co. They commence the manufacture of butter. In 1936 the company purchases a small building on South F Street and starts operations there. The expansion to a complete machine operation continues through 1940.
Harvey Richards, Sr. was born 1/06 in Calvert, TX. This Texas A&M graduate serves as a major in the Army Air Force in WWI. This St. Alban's Episcopal Church member will also serve his community as a life member of Kiwanis, charter member of the Elks, and City Commissioner 1940-41. The municipal airport west of the Wilson Tract will be named in his honor. When he dies 6/14/60 he leaves behind his wife Kathryn, daughter Mary Kay Richards, and son Harvey Lee Richards, Jr.

John Wallace Richards was to die in 1991. His widow Sue Wiley Richards was to die 11/26/08 at age 98. The daughter of Susie Lotts speed Thomas Wiley and Mansel Thomas Wiley she came, in 1910, to the Valley and Mission in a covered wagon as an infant with three older siblings. Her father taught school there before the family moved to La Feria. In 1955 Sue, her husband and George Beck built Sandy Retreat, the first vacation home on South Padre Island. It was later expanded into the Sandy Retreat Hotel, the first modern hotel on the island since the 1933 hurricane. They ran the hotel until 1964.

In the midst of the Great Depression, Harlingen bank deposits are at $1,147,323. Its assessed real estate is $7,568,290 with a tax rate of $1.80/$100 valuation.

The Julian Villareals, descendents of a land grant family, tear down the frame store built in the city's early days and replace it with a Spanish colonial style building at 324 W. Van Buren. Julian's widow, Emma, runs a grocery store/meat market here for many years.

Parker Knapp, one of five brothers - Everett, John, Gilson, Fred, and Parker - opens Knapp Chevrolet dealership in downtown Harlingen at West Jackson. When it burns down in 1935 he moves to West Harrison and in 1941 to 1st Street between Harrison and Tyler. The employees number about 25. By 1939 the bothers are operating dealerships in Weslaco, Mercedes, Brownsville, and Houston. In 2000 the local Knapp facility moves to new quarters south of Expressway 83 at Stuart Place Road. Here the sons of Gretchen Knapp, daughter of Parker, and her husband Butch Cooley run the dealership. By 2004 seventy employees sell 16 different models. The old location is occupied by Frank Matz's Central Air and Heat. Some of the structures on the lot are demolished.

It is 1934 that Volkie L. Adair opens his Midway Service Station on South F Street. This farmer also, is to die at age 48 on 1/11/61.

This same year Neil Madeley purchases Shelton's RGV Grocery at 215 E. Jackson. The Levine family opens its retail outlet, The Man's Shop. Ben Levine was born in Poland-Russia in December 1904, but the following year his family immigrated to the US and soon Texas. He came to the Valley in 1926 to take employment in a music store operated by his sister and brother-in-law who were later to set him up in the Harlingen men's store and other relatives in Weslaco and McAllen. Marrying Fannie Gensberg of Seguin in 1928, they were to produce sons Leonard and Lewis who attended Harlingen schools. A star football player at UT Lewis was to return to Harlingen and join his father and brother Leonard in business in 1951. Ben was to die at age 88 in 1993. He was one of the founders of the Jewish temple in Mercedes and later in Harlingen. His wife who outfitted boy scouts in the store died in 1987 at age 79. After 56 years the store closed in Harlingen in 1990, but the store opened in Brownsville in 1984 continued.

The Harlingen-based radio station KRGV moves to a more central Valley location in Weslaco.

1935 Harlingen car sales at 439 for January-October 1935 period are the highest in Cameron County.
The Yellow Freight System starts as does Sechrist-Hall, the roofers. Jim Ferguson, after working as auto parts manager for another Harlingen agency, acquires a Chrysler one. He then receives the Chrysler franchise in 1938. Don Bodenhamer, Sr. joins the firm as partner in 1941. In 1958 Ferguson purchases Harlingen Motors, a Dodge-Plymouth agency and added the Chrysler line. The Harlingen Dodge agency was originally organized by George Wroten. In 1936 it is located at 516 W. Jackson but a year later is at 424 W. Harrison. By 1942 it had dropped the name Wroten and was the Harlingen Motors Dodge and Plymouth. Wroten later sold it to Dr. George Gallaher. Ferguson bought the agency from Gallaher. Ferguson fell seriously ill in 1962 and sold out his stock before dying in 1978. In 1939 the firm built its first 13,000 square foot structure and added a similar size one in 1946 at 602 W. Jackson. It is Noser Construction which erects the patented high ceiling, supposedly hurricane-proof structure. It features red cedar beams and reinforced thick concrete walls. During the war years when autos were not available the firm sold refrigerators, stoves, and washers. In 1972 the agency obtained the Winnebago Recreational Vehicle franchise. In 1993-94 this old agency is bought out by the aggressive and well-advertised Bert Ogden Co.

Don Bodenhammer will go on to greatly help the community progress, largely in part as VP of the Chamber of Commerce when the Harlingen Air Force Base closes in 1962. He will serve 24 years on the Airport Board; stimulate the move from Harvey Richards Municipal Airport to the larger abandoned Harlingen Air Force Base field; help to bring in the Marine Military Academy, Lockheed Martin, Murray Air, TSTI, Levi Strauss, American and Southwest Airlines. In 1996 at age 78 he continues as owner of Ferguson Motors.

It is in this year that the San Antonio Machine and Supply Company (SAMSCO) opens a warehouse at 1201 W. Jackson, but back in 1915 it had sold equipment here for the first refrigeration plant. In 1955 it is to open a new $200,000 facility at 114 North L Street. Dewitt Neal will be its manager here for 30 years or more.

In 1935 Kenneth MacPherson is to visit his parent, Leo W. and Zora Allen MacPherson, who have moved from Tecamah, Nebraska to the Valley. Born in 1906 in Burke County, Nebraska, his family moved to Saskatchewan, Canada when he was six only to return to Nebraska six years later. Others in his family were pharmacists so he followed, earning his degree from Creighton University in Omaha. Kenneth would move to the Valley and reside in several cities before deciding on Harlingen. He would marry Hazel Haire who would later bear him three daughters. One, now Gerry Fleuriet, would in later years become deeply involved in community and civic affairs. Her son Ken would become a one-term state representative from this area. At first Kenneth worked for McLarry's Pharmacy until he was able to buy a small newsstand/pharmacy in the Embee Building. Five years later in 1945 he will open the pharmacy bearing his name and maintain it for nearly 50 years before selling it. He was both a druggist and a manufacturing chemist.

After Hazel died Kenneth married Juanita Stowe, a longtime friend from church. In late November 2004 when Kenneth celebrated his 98th birthday, he had been married to his second wife for 24 years. This First Presbyterian member, Elk, Mason, Kiwani, and much more was to die 5/12/05 leaving his wife and three daughters.
1935-36  In the throes of the Great Depression, Harlingen building permits total only $54,907 for 1935 and $51,542 for 1936. Bank deposits total $1,147,323. There are 12 hotels having 565 rooms.

1936/37  The Harlingen Canning Company, which is owned by Howard E. Butt, commences its operations to produce "Texas-grown, Texas-packed" goods at its Harlingen plant. HEB became vertically integrated by purchasing the plant and also a bakery. R. L. Hill, the ice-making entrepreneur, goes into partnership with H.E. Butt, to operate the cannery. Hill may have commenced the building of a canning plant at F Street between Jackson and Monroe on site of a junkyard. Initially it was a 50' x 100' metal building, and its manager until 1940 was Merle Clark. It would later expand into a giant two-story factory of 84,540 sq. ft.. Hill, who came to the Valley in 1928, would have ice plants not only in Harlingen but also McAllen, Raymondville, and Brownsville. Here he was president of both the C of C and the Kiwanis Club, as well as being first v-p of the First National Bank. With a buyout in 1965 by the Stumberg Brothers of San Antonio, the cannery operates until July 1968. It processes 55 items as varied as tomatoes, green beans, three types of greens, grapefruit and orange juices, potato and corn chips, pineapples, preserves, bottles soda water, and salad dressing among others. 150 are employed year-round and up to 1,500 at peak periods. Hill is president, Butt vice-president, Milton Clapp, secretary, and Merle M. Clark manager of the cannery for the first three years until relieved by Van C. Snell, who stayed on for 33 years. Snell started as a foreman in 1937, then became plant superintendent and finally general manager. Butt opened his first Valley retail store in Brownsville in 1928. He then expanded to San Benito, and opened his third store on Jackson in Harlingen. Harold Miller comes here in 1957 to manage it then two years later becomes HEB's Valley district manager. Sam Lockwood became Valley market supervisor. In 1958 Butt opens the Commerce Street store giving it a $1.3 million expansion in August 1984. By 1960 the company operates 84 stores in 35 cities. HEB's fourth Harlingen store is built in the late 1970s at the corner of Morgan and Austin. Its 5th store, constructed near Valle Vista Mall in 1986, has 60,000 sq. ft.

3/1/36  The Valley Morning Star's circulation is touted at 3,677 home deliveries, 1,274 motor routes, 1,370 via Valley mail (142 out of the area), and 190 hotel sales for a total 6,653 paid circulation. Its only competitor is the weekly Harlingen News.

1936  The Valley Baking Co. plant is the largest bakery south of San Antonio and Houston. With a fleet of trucks it delivers 20,000 loaves daily. Hygeia starts building at its South F Street site and completes the $50,000 plant this year. A survey reveals that there are 288 stores in the city. Seven motorbus lines serve the city as do five trucking companies. At this time Harlingen is traversed by U.S. Highways 96 and 83 and State Highways 4, 66, 96, and 100. The Acetylene Oxygen Company establishes a branch in Harlingen.

11/5/36  The Plaza Hotel at this time is owned by the Royal Hotel Corp. of San Antonio. It is valued at $65,000 with a content value of $50,000.
1937  The First National Bank of Harlingen moves into the 1920s building at 124 W. Jackson. It mid-year it has deposits of $1,747,176 and resources of $1,863,037. Surviving the depression it remains there until 1951. In this year the immense plant which will house the Harlingen Canning Co. is constructed. On 12/3/37, Montgomery Ward will open its new Valley store at 115-123 N 1st. 

The 150 room Madison Hotel has room rates ranging from $1.50 to $4.00, the 150 room Reese-Wil-Mond the same, and the 80 room Plaza charges $1.00 to $2.00. C. R. Anthony Co., advertising itself as the "newest, most modern department store" opens a branch on Jackson Street.  

1937-38-39  Economic upswing sees building permits rise to $390,998 in 1937, only to slip badly to $252,844 and $242,135 respectively for 1938 and 1939. 

1938 Bank deposits for city banks total $1,915,805 while postal receipts are $69,843. 

6/38  From the period July 1937 through June 1938 inclusive, Harlingen ice facilities produce more ice for fruit and vegetable shipments than do any other city in the state. The Harlingen Yards have 83 initial and 23 re-icers totaling 466.25 tons in the period while the Harlingen Dock (located just east of Fair Park) has 773 initials and 89 re-icers totaling 4,684.65 tons. These are almost wholly for railroad freight cars owned by the American Refrigerator Transit Co. (A.R.T.). Ice Plant No. 39 Harlingen, accessed via Memphis Street, is still in operation as part of the Southwestern Ice Company, Inc. At one point the plant was operated by Southern Texas Ice and Service, Inc. The plant had a cooling tower, concrete pond, and reservoir. It was in constant operation and generated electric power. 

Fred A. Granzo is owner and operator of the Rio Grande Taxi located across from the MO-PAC depot. He advertises "10 cents anywhere in Harlingen. Careful, sober, reliable chauffers. Absolutely sanitary cars with fresh seat covers changed daily." 

3/17/38  A sulfur explosion at the Coastal Chemical Co., 421 N. C Street, creates a $14,061 loss. 

1939  H.E.B takes over the Piggly Wiggly store at 123 E. Jackson. It was 8/27/39 when Stacey-Mitchell Cleaners becomes part of the Harlingen scene. This year, after their father dies, Jesus J. Rodriguez and his brother Tony leave the San Raphael Ranch west of Santa Rosa and come to Harlingen. Their family has been leasing 2,000 acres in the Adams Garden Tract for the depression era price of $200 per year. The two open a grocery store at 410 E. Harrison. On 11/4/41 J.J. enlists in the U.S. Army selling his share of the store to his brother for $1,000 but with the stipulation he can repurchase it upon his return. His is discharged with the rank of sergeant on 11/24/45. In 1946 following his discharge he borrows $4,000 from the First National Bank as a GI loan and repurchases the store now located at 403 E. Harrison. It is in 1948 that Jesus J. "Chuey" Rodriguez opens his Chuey's Red and White Grocery and Market at 222 W. Harrison in the building that once housed Harlingen's first Ford dealership. This was the Hollingsworth Motor Company which was to build the handsome art deco building across the street in 1930. No. 222 had been vacant for numerous years until the Valley Motor Mart occupied it in the years 1944-46 and then Adolfo Escobedo commenced his Adolfo's Grocery and Market. Chuey was to take over the site in 1948 when Escobedo
moved his store one block west and anglicized its name to "Adolf's." The Red and White refers to the large San Antonio wholesale supplier which furnishes merchandise to small grocers around the state. Chuey will occupy this site until 1963 when the business opens as Chuey's Supermarket at 607 W. Harrison. He has purchased this building from Attorney Lloyd Stiernberg. Rodriguez renames his business Chuey's Discount Center in 1968. After the store experiences a fire in 1972 Chuey's family, with knowledge of the competition from the national chain Kroeger and the increasingly aggressive H. E. Butt stores, urges him not to reopen. He then begins a long career (still continuing at age 87 in March 2005) as a real estate salesman associated with Tom Mason. In 1958 J.J. becomes the second Hispanic elected to the City Commission. When, on 12/14/60, Fred Paschall, owner of a retail store, is elected mayor, Rodriguez is reelected a commissioner as is R.W. Liston. J.J. is a member and strong supporter of the Chamber of Commerce. By this year the city has ten tourist cottage camps. In this year the Strand Theater has opened at 111W. Jackson in a building previously occupied by Woolworth. J. C. King is its manager. When it closes its doors in 1955 Lew Bray is its owner.

Charles J. Davis commences The Diana Shop with its ready-to-wear women's clothing. It will operate for 42 years, all but one at 115 E. Jackson Avenue. 8/39 Married in 1932, Joe Kirsh and his wife Ruth Chernicoff Kirsh come to Harlingen from St. Louis. Both are early 1920s immigrants from Poland-Russia. He starts a business buying scrap iron and metals and selling new and used pipe and steel. Located on North Commerce, it is called the Valley Junk Yard. After 34 years in business and having raised two daughters in Harlingen, Joe sells his business in 1973 and with his wife moves to Florida where in 1995 they will celebrate their 63rd wedding anniversary.

People

1930s As the Great Depression deepens Raphael Cavazos, who has purchased a real estate tract nears F Street, practices conservatism with his funds and manages to survive. 1930 This year Dr. John Graham Brittain moves to the city with his bride Bernadine. Schooled in Houston he is the first orthodontist to establish a practice in the Valley. He worked in the Baxter Building until his death in 1960. His civic endeavors were numerous. They included building and running for ten years the American Legion pool at Fair Park, organizing and financing the Safety Sally program for the schools, setting up a volunteer program at the hospital to massage children's limbs during the polio epidemic and arranging for MGM Studios to send a film for viewing by the children every Friday, and coordinating the administration of typhoid shots for school children. During WWII he headed the civilian defense program for Cameron County. Bernadine, an accomplished pianist, helped to found the Women's Music Club and was an active participant in the Civic Music Association, predecessor to the Harlingen Concert Association. She later served as State President of PEO. Dying in 1994 she was buried next to her husband in Mont Meta Cemetery.

1/25/30 This date Maria Aurora is born in Harlingen to Edelmiro and Maria Gonzales. She will marry Gilberto Rodriguez. In 1960 they will take over the ownership and operation of La Reynera Bakery at 506 W. Van Buren and continue for 35 years. It was established in 1937 by Gilberto's parents Filiberto and Margarita Rodriguez. Dying on
9/10/06 at age 76 Aurora will leave behind her partner of 55 years, Gilberto, and a large family.

2/19  R.W. Liston is born in Harlingen to early Harlingenites William Osie Liston and Lily Chaudoin Liston (later Cleary). He will be graduated from Harlingen High School and attend the University of Texas. In 1950 he joins the family business and over time moves up to president, CEO, and chairman of the W.T. Liston Co., concrete fabricators. He dies 12/18/02. His civic dedication centered on his Boy Scout support but also involved Girl Scouting, the City Commission on which he served, the Valley Chamber of Commerce and much more. He is survived by his wife Jo, children Jolie Liston, Pat William Liston, and Felice Liston Rogala.

11/16  Dora I. Salazar is born this date to Mary & Jesus Salazar. He is a farm crew leader and the family also owns a 20-acre tract near Harrison and 23rd Streets. She will be graduated from the Providence School of Nursing, Waco in 1956. Here she would meet her future husband Julian Castillo. They would be married for 39 years until his death in 1992. They would both work at the Breckenridge Hospital, Austin then in Armarillo. In 1972 Julian came to Pan Am University as a consultant and from 1973 to 1992 was director of health-related professions at the university. Dora in 1975 rose to be in charge of Student Health Services at Pan Am and remained in this capacity until retiring in 1992. In 1973 after their daughter Lorena became a resident of the Rio Grande State Center in Harlingen Dora became intimately involved there as a volunteer. In 1979 she was named Outstanding Texas State Volunteer and was the recipient of the Menton Murray Sr. Award for having put in 10,000 volunteer hours. By the time of her death on 12/06/06 she had amassed 22,000 volunteer hours at the center. On December 4, 2007 a pavilion, for which Dora helped to raise funds, was dedicated and named in her honor at the RG State Center.

It is in 1930 that the family of Jesse Clair Hay comes to Harlingen. He later founds Jesse Hay, Contractor, but this First Baptist Church member dies young at age 41 on 8/30/60. He leaves behind his wife Pauline and sons Jesse, Jr. and Jimmy as well as his brother Tim Hay.

This is the year that Troy R. McDaniel arrives in Harlingen. He becomes, over time, general manager for KGBT TV and Radio. He serves as president of the library board and is a member of the First Presbyterian Church. He dies relatively early at age 57 on 4/3/61.

Arriving in the Valley this year is Joe O. Reger from Alta, OK. He would come to own the Reger Neon Sign Co. on Baker-Potts Road. He will die of a .22 caliber gun wound at age 51 on 3/6/62 and leave his widow Pansy here, and children elsewhere.

In Harlingen this year is J.B. Hicks from Robstown. On 3/1 he will commence the Hicks Rubber Co. and later he will come to own the Hicks Oil and Butane Co. This Church of Christ member also was a Mason and a Lion. Dying of a heart attack at age 60 on 3/5/62, he leaves his wife Marie and son J.B. Hicks, Jr.

Dolphus M. Groulx of 409 E. Taylor is already established here. This longtime Harlingen resident is to die here at age 93 on 3/18/62. By then he was a retired music/art dealer and also a prominent citrus producer. He leaves behind his widow Alma and son Robert.

Jacob Schmoker was already retired at 322 E. Madison in 1930. He had been involved in a ten acre citrus grove north of City Lake. He was a charter member of Grace English Lutheran Church. His son of the same name was to be briefly owner in a 1939
partnership with B.C. Price of a Buick dealership. Schmoker-Price Motors was at the intersection of F and Van Buren Streets. A second son Fred R. Schmoker born in Harlingen 3/30/14 will serve in the U.S. Navy in WWII and go on to a career as a banker in Raymondville. When Fred dies 1/18/04 he leaves his wife of 64 years Donnie Self Schmoker but no children.

1930 Moises V. (Moe) Vela is born in Harlingen. He will later attend Austin Elementary, be graduated form Harlingen High School, receive his Associate of Arts degree from Texas Southmost College in Brownsville in 1949 and his law degree at St. Mary's University in San Antonio. He is to work at the Cameron County Courthouse from 1956-58 as assistant district attorney, a corporation court judge in Harlingen at various times 1971-95, and serve as a county judge 1983-86. Married in 1955, he is to father five children who will have ten grandchildren by 2004. On 12/15/04, the school board votes to name a new middle school in Vela's honor.

1931 Normah Alcott Knight, born in Dallas 7/25/10, comes to Harlingen with her husband Bob along with her parents and brother Ed Alcott and his wife Mary. In 1947, in an old surplus army barracks moved next to her home on E. Buchanan Avenue, she opens the Valley's first art gallery/school. It remains open for twenty years. Mrs. Knight creates murals for the 1948 Holsum Bakery Co. plant on W. Harrison, 1950-51 First National Bank (later moved to the old post office building taken over by Coastal Banc), and in 1955 Royal Crown Cola, a facility owned by her husband and Bert Alcott. Mrs. Knight dies in Harlingen at age 94 on June 29, 2005 leaving behind her son Bob Knight, Jr. and daughter Roberta Knight Fogle along with numerous grandchildren.

Ernest Quentin Clover comes this year also. He becomes a contractor. In death at age 77, 8/30/60, he leaves his wife Sallie, son J.J. of Harlingen, and one elsewhere.

John Elliff is here this year. This First Methodist Church member was born 12/3/74 in Anderson, MO. He will come to own the Elliff Apartments at 421 E. Monroe. When he dies at age 87 on 9/6/72 he will leave his widow Rose and son L. Luther Elliff.

Fred L. Lopez opens Valley Barber Supply, soon renamed to Valley Barber & Beauty Supply, at 413 W. Harrison. On April 23, 1939 he is to marry Connie G. Garza. She was born in San Manuel, Hidalgo County. It was her grandfather, Felix Chapa who owned the ranch there in the 1800s, and it was named San Manuel Ranch after his father's saint name. It was later traded for gold. Mrs. Lopez assisted her husband in the business which is still operating (2006) at the same location. Ninety-three years old on 9/17/06, Mrs. Lopez was one of the founders of St. Anthony's Catholic Church and served on the board of the Harlingen Museum.

2/11/31 William Zachary (W.Z.) Weems dies this date at age 71. He was born 10/3/59 in Chenango, TX. In his forties he had been active in clearing much Harlingen area land and in growing sugarcane and starting a sugar syrup mill. He is buried in a family plot in the Harlingen Cemetery, where his teenage son was the first to be interred.

This year Genaro Cano, Sr. and his wife come to Harlingen. They will later open a grocery store on Polk Street. Married 10/13/03 in Burgos, Nuevo Leon they will celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary in 1978 with five of their surviving six children.

3/15/31 Ruben Rodriguez is born to Gabriel and Maria Palacios Rodriguez. They operate a grocery store on W. Harrison in the La Placita area. Ruben would go on to have
an illustrious career and life. At age 11 he took up magic and by 16 took on the name the "Great Rubenzini". During WWII he played taps at military funerals. Upon completion of Harlingen High School in 1949 he went on to Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos then transferred to North Texas State University in Denton. He entertained as a magician for several years then enlisted in the Air Force during the Korean Conflict. Upon his 1955 discharge he returned to college and received his degree in Spanish. He married Dolores who was to be his wife for 47 years. She was a teacher and both returned to North Texas to earn masters degrees. Ruben was a pioneer bilingual educator in the Valley and one of the first Hispanic school superintendents in the country. He occupied this position in Donna for six years before moving on to San Benito in the same capacity until 1987. Ruben was to die 5/20/08, leaving behind his wife Dolores, daughter Deanna R. Gutierrez, an Austin lobbyist, sons Ronnie, principal of Port Isabel High School, and Rico, assistant principal at San Benito High School.

5/31/32 At age 69 Lon C. Hill is given a testimonial and honored as founder of the city. Jack Jones begins working with the First National Bank of Harlingen and will do so for 30 years. He will be a charter member of the BPOE and a director of the Life Begins at 40 golf tournament. When this First Methodist member dies 1/8/62 at age 49 of cancer he leaves his widow, Beauma.

George Le Clare Simmons will come to the area. He will become nationally known as a breeder and exhibitor of Tennessee walking horses. He will own Simmons Bootery between 1932 and 1958. When this First Presbyterian member dies on 11/11/61 he will leave his wife Grace and a brother in Lubbock.

Coming from Oklahoma this year is Jake Wheatley. He takes up farming. Dying at age 82, 5/30/60, he leaves behind sons Floyd of Santa Rosa and Charles of Harlingen.

10/9/32 James Daniel Altus is born in Harlingen to Walter and Clara Altus. A Harlingen High School graduate he will go on to Texas A&M University. In 1954 he is commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Air force. He will go on to rise to the rank of lt.-colonel during which time he will have received numerous awards and citations. Upon retirement he became a USDA inspector in the Valley. He is to die at age 66 on 8/19/99 to be survived by son James W. (Kelly) Altus and daughter Jeanette Altus Porter.

10/23/32 Joan Chaudoin is born in Harlingen to Joseph Clinton and Dallas Hardin Davenport Chaudoin. On 11/27/54 she is to marry William Hill Cocke, Jr. in Harlingen where they will live and raise four children. In 1954 she was the first Algodon Club queen while attending UT at the time. For 17 years she was an active member of the Junior Service League serving as its president 1967-68, volunteer for the Family Crisis Center, United Way, and other civic endeavors. Dying at age 61 on 5/10/94 she is to leave her mother, husband, three daughters and a son behind.

1933 Mary Freese Wroten was here this year to be near her son George. This Episcopalian born 8/26/1850 lived to age 100. She had married Dr. George Wroten and lived in South Dakota where he had been superintendent of Indian schools as well as surgeon for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Later they moved to Louisiana where the doctor died in 1917.

Tony Butler first comes to Harlingen as a 25 year old in 1933. Born in Ganado, Texas 4/19/08, he grows up to be a slight to average-build young man. A protege of the famed
Austin golfer Harvey Penick, Butler is to turn professional in 1928 shortly after entering the University of Texas. He is to move to Port Arthur as a pro then return to UT as student/coach, the first golf coach at the school. In 1931 he wins the Texas PGA and a chance to play in the PGA Championship in Providence. This year he is in the money six times. In 1932 he places second in the Texas PGA Championship played in Harlingen. Butler would leave Harlingen for a position in Beeville but was soon to return and become a fixture as golf pro here for many years. He is good and plays the 18 hole course in a record 62 strokes as verified by his August 6, 1936 score card now in the library archive. The course par at the time is 71. When he does leave for greener pastures his devotees petition him to return. On June 20, 1973 the course is renamed the Tony Butler Municipal Golf Course in recognition of his 40 years of service. He retires in 1975 and becomes Professional Emeritus. Butler is to die in December 1979 at age 71. In 1998 he is inducted into the Rio Grande Valley Sports Hall of Fame.

1934  S.M. Harvey came to Harlingen and was to live here 28 years. He became supervisor of Valley H.E.B. stores before retiring in 1958. This Methodist was to die 1/1/62.

E.P. McCall, who will become an insurance agent, arrives here from San Augustine, TX. He will be a deacon of the First Presbyterian Church, a Mason and Shriner, and in 1952, a city commissioner. Dying 7/10/73 he leaves his wife Margaret and son Porter of Corpus Christi.

This is the year Morrison Holmes Connelly comes to Harlingen. Born January 6, 1909 in Trenton Texas, he grew up on the family ranch and worked in the family pharmacy. In 1930 he received his Bachelor in Education from Southwest State Teacher’s College then much later in 1945 his master's degree in the same subject from UT. Once in Harlingen he accepted a teaching position at the Stuart Place School. He married Mildred Oline in 1938, and they had one daughter Morline Connelly Haley. The next 13 years he then served as principal at Sam Houston, Bowie, and Travis Elementary Schools and Harlingen High School before becoming Harlingen Superintendent of Schools for three years. Following his 17-year school tenure he became vp of the insurance division of Flynn Investments for 10 years. In 1970 he started the Connelly-Cocoza Insurance Agency before returning to Flynn in 1975. In April 1988 he was to commence the Connelly and Bartnesky Insurance Agency. This man was active in Rotary, the United Fund, the public library, parks and recreation, the First Methodist Church, a student aid loan service, and obtaining medical funding for needy children. He was to die January 27, 2007 at age 98, leaving a grandson and his children.

1/28/34 Polk Hornaday, practicing law here for 11 years, is joined by Arthur Klein, son of Mr. & Mrs. A.E. Klein. Arthur has been practicing here since 1932 after being graduated from Harlingen High School and the U. of Texas Law School.

5/5/35 Lon C. Hill, Harlingen founder, dies at age 73. He is buried beside his wife and sons in the Buena Vista Cemetery, Brownsville. In comments he is characterized as having "rare sense of humor and remarkable ability at telling a story", "individuality to a
degree most uncommon in this day and age; the indomitable will power, the results of his efforts found him almost a man alone."

Early this year Arthur Franklin Dabney and his wife Marguerite Smith arrive from Ft. Worth where he has been a bookkeeper for an oil company. Born in central Texas they bring with them daughters Charlotte (1920) and Carolyn (1926). He has been hired by Allie White and Mr. Blocker to start a small business of car loans. He serves as City Commissioner 12/38-12/46. They purchase a house at 510 W. Buchanan in 1940. This same year he is to close the loan business and purchase the insurance one from White and Blocker. It would evolve into the Dabney Hall Agency at 410 E Harrison.

Born in Newlin, TX 3/12/21, John Wesley (Bill) Loven comes this year to Harlingen with his parents A. O. and Mary Lou Loven. He is 14 and in 1941 will graduate from HHS, soon after joining the Army Air Corps. He will then serve in the European Theater with the 551 Parachute Infantry Battalion and the 508 of the 82nd Airborne Infantry Division. In September 1946 he will marry Bettie Jane and during a 59 year marriage span have daughters Janie, Judith Anne, and Jeanne Marie, who survive him and Joanna Sue Loven who precedes him at his death at age 84, on November 10, 2005. This member of the First Baptist Church will have a 33 year career with the U.S. Postal Service.

1938 Mary Caroline Schleifer leaves her position as a nurse at the Buffalo City Hospital to accompany her ailing parents to the Valley. She then begins her long modern nursing career in the area. She fought polio, TB, and Hurricane Buelah's emergencies among other challenges. A plaque at the old hospital in the museum complex honors her as one of three "Pioneer Valley Nurses, 1939". In 1977 she was selected as "Nurse of the Year" for Cameron and Willacy Counties while the 1984 issue of Notable Women of Texas honored her for her work in the RGV. Mary retired in 1987 after devoting a lifetime to her chosen profession. Born 9/1/1914 in Kerrville, TX, Mary was to die at age 94 on 12/7/08.

7/18/38 Carlos Flavio Vela is born in Harlingen to Roberto and Maria Luisa Vela. He was the last of nine children that included six boys and three girls. His brothers included Roberto, Jr., Filemon, Patricio, Moises, and Antonio. The family had its origins in the pioneering Vela family of northeast Hidalgo County. Roberto came to Harlingen in the 1920s and was the city's first Hispanic notary public. He also ran an interpreting business and prepared income tax forms. Three sons went into law, two were educators, and one had a career in the Marines. Carlos was graduated from HHS in 1956, received his law degree from UT in 1962, and worked as assistant attorney general for the state from 1964 to 1966. He then became a federal general attorney for the Equal Opportunity Commission and USDA. In 1968 he became Texas State Coordinator for the Dept. of Health Education and Welfare Office of Civil Rights. Returning to Harlingen in 1970 he practiced law here until two months before his death. He never married.

This same year William J. "Bill" Allen comes by bicycle from Grand Rapids, Michigan. This Spanish–American War veteran will from 1942 to 1946 work as a messenger for the post engineer at the Harlingen Army Air Field. He then goes to work for the WaterWorks until his retirement at age 71 in 1951.

10/13/39 At a Pioneer Reunion at the home of Harvey Richards the following individuals and many of their wives are present: Tom Yates, MO (1911), E.W. Anglin, TX (1907),
J.F. Rodgers, MO (1909 or 1910), John Newman, IN (1924), T.L. Sidener, IN (1914),
L.G. Nichols, OK (1909), George Pletcher, Sr. OH (1909), T.L. Phillips, KY (1909), J.F.
Hathaway, CA (1904), Grant Rader, MO (1916), and M.M. Brown, NC (1913).

Education

1/21/30  A high school gym and stadium is proposed. Together the cost would be
$150,000. The stadium would seat 10,000. Sports enthusiast Ben Epstein was promoting
the idea.
6/30  Student enrollment is put at 2,383. W.W. Ballard, who will later become business
manager of the school district, is principal of the Sam Houston School.
9/4/30  Called "the showplace of the Valley", the new $350,000 senior high school at 125 S.
13th Street at Harrison is dedicated. It is designed by architects Dewitt and Washburn
of Dallas. The former designed the east wing of the White House. It has advanced
features such as almost square rooms, sliding blackboards, a first class cafeteria, large
rest rooms for teachers, boys and girls showers, special cooking and sewing classrooms,
an auditorium with a motion picture booth, a sound proof music room on the second
floor, a photo darkroom, and illumination spotlights for the front exterior. At this time the
superintendent of schools is Paul E. Phipps. On the board of Trustees are Mrs. J.I.
Coursey, O.N. Joyner, Ira E. Eells, S.D. Grant, A.E. McClendon, and Dr. John Crockett.
The Harlingen Senior High School principal is D.M. Denton. The last senior class to use
the facility is that of 1959 which started there but finished in the new high school on
Marshall Street. The Spanish Revival style facility in 1958 becomes a junior high school.
Additional classrooms are constructed on the northeast side in 1961.
The West Ward School is at 415 South F Street. Its principal is Mrs. Bertha J. Traylor.
The South Ward School is at 309 W. Lincoln and Mrs. Lucy A. Phillips Gough is its
principal. It will later be re-named the James Bowie Elementary School. At the Dishman
School in Combes Mrs. Lillian Baldridge is principal and at the North Ward School Mrs.
Kathleen Robertson fills that position. The elementary school students at Central Ward
are under the leadership of B.E. Bailey. After the high school students move into their
new facilities on 13th Street, the Travis Junior High School campus grows to include the
former high school on 6th Street. Having moved from the Central Ward School, Carl S.
Chilton is its principal.
A small school that existed for several years was the Good Will Center at 507 S. C Street.
It helped make Mexican students in their traditional Spanish language. Not far from it at
402 W. Polk was the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School with Sister M. Ernestine
as principal.

In 1930 the Harlingen Valley Business College was located at 215 ½ W. Monroe. By
1937 the college was operating on the third floor of the Embee Building addition at 119 S.
Street. B.A. Griswald and his wife Lelia Jane owned and taught at the school. After
being here five to six years, Mrs. Griswald was to die at age 60 on 5/6/35. When between
1938 and 1941 the Durham Business Institute took over the site, Mrs. Harman Straub, by
then the owner, moved her school to the Commerce Building at 121 W. Van Buren. She
would close altogether by 1944. By 1942 the Embee school location had become the
Durham Business College and was under the management of Carl A. Scott. It stayed in
this location until 1958 then, after a year at 106 ½ N 1st, moved to 5621 S. F Street. In the 70s it changed its name to Durham College of the Valley. Durham was to go out of business after 1973, possibly when it experienced difficulties with defaulted government student loans.

10/1930 The first of numerous "Battle of the Arroyo" football contests occurs between Harlingen High School and San Benito High School. Harlingen wins this first game 19 to 0. Over a 74 year period the record would be in Harlingen's favor at 53 victories, 16 losses and 5 ties.

In this decade children could start school in mid-school year as well as in the fall. The determinant was birth month. This also meant that some students were graduated mid-year.

30-31 A listing encompassing eleven years indicates the growth of the city and its student school population: school year 1920-21 816, 21-22 853, 22-23 1052, 23-24 1099, 24-25 1121, 25-26 1359, 26-27 1686, 27-28 2152, 28-29 2450, 29-30 2735, 30-31 2897. The school budget this year is $217,983 for a final enrollment figure of 3,138. Six year olds were allowed to attend for the first time in this school term.

In 1931 by the time Superintendent Phipps resigns the student enrollment has grown to 3,128 with a city population of 12,124.

1931 (fall) J. T. Buck serves as superintendent until August 1934. The Great Depression forces the district to curtail its expenditures. This year Ira E. Eells becomes the business manager of the school system, a position that he holds for a decade.

10/21/31 The Harlingen school office is robbed. This year the high school football team wins the Class A Valley Championship.

1932 The Coast & Geodetic Service map of the Harlingen Quadrant shows the two building Palmetal School located at the far east end of Grimes Road and south of Rio Hondo Road. It serves the farm children of the sparsely populated area.

9/5/33 The Labor Day Hurricane of 1933 delays the start of school from 9/18 initially to 9/25 and then to 10/2. The high school on 6th Street is damaged beyond repair as is the school for Negroes in the West side of town. The North and South Ward Schools suffer only minor damage. The number of students is put at 3,430, down 147 from the previous year.

1933 The eighth grade class is moved to the high school building on 13th Street. School Superintendent J.P. Buck expresses concern over the projected drop in state monetary support. In 1931 it was $17.50 per student but in 1932 had dropped to $16. It was forecast to drop to $8.50 for 1933-34 unless the state legislature adopted corrective measures. Even a state income tax was being considered as an option. The district was educating 3,600 students. If the support dropped to $8.50 there was even talk of shortening the school year from nine months to six. Buck and Ira Eells were later to attend a conference of school heads to discuss the situation.
1934 The Booker T. Washington School to serve Harlingen's Negro children is erected in the 800 block of W. Filmore at H Street. As the number of blacks diminishes over the years it will be integrated. Although an addition to it will later be made, it is to be superceded. It ceases to be used as a school in 1959. It currently is being used by the school district as a Parental Involvement Center.

In the Fall of this year the Cardinal Football Field is constructed at the cost of $4,500. It is adjacent to the high school. This year also a long north-south annex is added to the Travis Junior high School just east of the auditorium.

9/1/34 From this date until August 31, 1941 E.C. Deering, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C., occupied the office of superintendent.

5/35 The School Board with Frank E. Davis as president, Dr. John Crockett vp, Ira E. Eells, secretary, and Mrs. H. C. Rader assistant secretary votes to rename the schools for the Texas Centennial to be held in 1936. The intermediate school is named for William B. Travis, Central Ward for Sam Houston, North Ward for Stephen F. Austin, South Ward for James Bowie, and the West Ward for the Alamo.

1935-36 The school budget drops to $192,125 for 3,276 students.

1936 In this year in recognition of the Centennial of Texas Independence all Harlingen schools are renamed to reflect Texas patriots and events. The school system has 80 teachers. The West Ward School for Hispanic students becomes the Alamo Junior High School.

1937 The newer Alamo Elementary School is operating at 501-21 South F Street. By 1970 it ceases to function.

In this period E.C. Deering is superintendent of schools. He holds a BA from Baylor University and an MA from the University of Texas. D.M. Denton, who is the high school principal, holds an AB degree from Baylor University. William C. Black is principal at the Travis School while Lula B. Ellis fills that job at the Booker T. Washington all-black school. M.H. Connelly who will go to bigger jobs in the system is principal at Bowie in this period.

5/37 Ninety-five students are graduated from Harlingen High School.

5/25/38 Harlingen High School graduates 103. Frank E. Davis is school board president.

Religious

1930 G.W. and Isola Hay come to the city He is minister of the Christian Church, 1934-48. He dies in 1949 and she 7/1/60.

Proselytizing is evident from the telephone listing this year of the Mexican Baptist Church, 501 South C; Mexican Presbyterian Church, 424 W. Tyler; and the Mexican Christian Church, 916 W. Filmore.

The First Church of Christ Science has also been established by this year.

1/4/31 In memory of Elizabeth Stuart, members of the family who founded the Stuart Place development dedicate a pipe organ to the First Methodist Church South.
1932  Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church sanctuary doubles its physical capacity with the addition of a transept.
Calvary Baptist Church comes into being.

1933  The Assembly of God Church is the first of that denomination in the Valley when established in 1925. The Rev. L.B. Lane is founder and first pastor. Initially members meet at the Homeland Addition between Harlingen and San Benito. When it moved from Homeland to 11th and E. Madison the hurricane destroyed the framework being erected.

1934  The First Baptist Church begins a mission that will become Primera Iglesia Bautista.
12/28/34  The Salvation Army provides Christmas baskets for Harlingen's needy. In the midst of the Great Depression these are numerous. The baskets distributed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day feed an estimated 1000 people.

5/7/35  Harlingen churches conduct a joint concert at the First Methodist Church. This is the eleventh year in a series inaugurated for National Music Week.

11/11/36  The First Church of Nazarene is organized at the home of L.P. Leweling. D.A. Minton leads the group in prayer after which R. G. Cummings is selected as chairman. The congregation comes into formal being on 11/23/36 with 20 members. They worship at a tent at the corner of 5th and Madison. Lots for a building are purchased in 1938.

7/11/37  The Church of the Nazarene under the Rev. Phillip H. Hampsten is meeting at the Central Ward School while the Church of the Latter-Day Saints (American Branch) is meeting in the Embee Building. Alphonso Moncur is branch president.

1939  St. Alban's parish builds a more sizable sanctuary at the corner of 11th and Van Buren. Contractor Hugh Ramsey builds the brick edifice for $8,500 and at no profit to himself. It will be enlarged and remodeled in 1946. The old church, now to be used as a parish hall, will be moved behind the new one. The church's first rectory, at 718 E. Van Buren, will be purchased in 5/42.

Organizations—Social, Civil, Service

1930  The Fine Arts Club of Harlingen is organized and federated. Its motto is "Progress is the law of life" and its purpose is to stimulate minds of members to mature thinking. It fosters the advancement and appreciation of fine arts in the community. It commences with 13 charter members and adds 24 more in its first year.
C.E. Van Berg is president of the Boy Scouts of America, Rio Grande Council with its office in Harlingen at 320 N. 2nd Street.
1/12/30  This year the Boy Scout Council plans to expend $7,000 to improve Camp Perry.
2/1  The Harlingen Polo and Riding Club announces plans to build a 4 ½ mile riding course around its polo field, East F Street near the Arroyo Colorado.
Several women's clubs coordinate plans to make Harlingen the City of Trees. Ash, acacia, huisach, mesquite, and retama are under consideration for planting. 

The Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs holds its 12th annual convention in Harlingen. At the three-day event centered at the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel and the Municipal Auditorium are 150-200 delegates.

The Harlingen Women's Chamber of Commerce is putting out an intensive drive for beautification of yards in the city.

When the Lower Rio Grande Valley Engineers' Club meets here they are shown the Liston plant's experiments with re-enforced concrete pipe making.

The Afflatus Club, a women's group dedicated to study and learning, is organized. After 65 years of existence the group is down to six members, Carolyn J. McCarley being one of them, and disbands in May 1997. While involved in historical studies and current events the club among other things sponsored the Tuberculosis Chest Clinic. It is also in 1932 that the Study Club sponsors a Jr. Study Club that by 1963 is known as the Contemporary Study Club.

The Harlingen Garden Club is organized with Mrs. E. W. Anglin as its first president. Its motto is "Today's vision is tomorrow's foundation." In 1934 it will affiliate with the RGV Federation of Women's Clubs. In actuality the garden group led for ten years by Mrs. A. J. Potter has been beautifying the city by planting palm, shade trees and shrubs. Working with Mrs. Potter have been Mrs. O. P. Storm, Mrs. E. W. Anglin, Mrs. Pearl Buck, Mrs. O. E. Stuart, Mrs. Charles Simmons and others. Over the years the garden group will have such projects as the Missouri Pacific grounds, Fair Park, Municipal Park (Bowie), HAAF Rose Garden, Golf Course Rose Garden, library grounds, USO patio and area trees. In 1936 it will join in the Valley-wide Bougainvillea Trail project conceived by Mrs. N. B. Lackland.

The Harlingen Art League gave one week of free art instructions under the direction of Mrs. Dolly Spidle Nabinger and assisted by Mrs. Mildred Flynn Dunahoo and Mrs. Lillian Weems Balridge.

About this time an unusual two story structure is erected on the vacant lots of 318-320 W. Jackson. The latter address becomes that of the American Legion Sports Arena. The second floor has a large open area and enclosed rooms on the north side. The open area is used as a roller skating rink and a dance floor. The neighbor downstairs at 318 is the Arena Market operated by R.P. Smith, who is also a trucker. He and his wife Odessa reside at 310 S. 9th Street.

This year the Junior Music Lovers Club is organized. Its charter members are: Dorothy Carlisle (her mother Mrs. Henry Carlisle was a leader in the Valley Civic Music Association), La Donna Polhemus, Barbara Ruth Green, Peggy Bush, Mary Jo Phipps, Jean Rozanne Pile, Jeanne Shirley Wood, Bessie Ferrine Willingham, Bettie Jeanne Burdette, Bettylou Williams, Kathleen Carter, Isla Lew Carey, Billie Faye Trammel, Eleanor Reeves Crockett, and Bernice McCune.
This same year the Better Harlingen Club, which had grown with Mrs. John Myrick as president and evolved into the Harlingen City Federation of Women's Clubs then the Women's Chamber of Commerce, was reorganized as the City Federation of Women's Clubs. Represented in it were Afflatus, the Business and Professional Women's Club, Fine Arts, Jr. Study Club, Music Lovers, Palmetal Home Demonstration, Primera Home Demonstration, Rio Grande Valley Art League, Study Club, and the Women's Chamber of Commerce. Later to join were the Altrusa Club, Child Guidance Club, Past Presidents' Club, Harlingen Garden Club, the Inspirational Study Group, and the Zonta Club.

1937 Knights of Columbus Keralum Council No. 2785 organizes in Harlingen. The Catholic organization is named after the Rev. Pierre Yves Keralum, 1817-1872, a member of the Oblate Fathers and an individual who designed many of the original Catholic churches in the Rio Grande Valley. Menton Murray Sr., a local attorney, state legislator, and later judge serves as its first grand knight from 1937 to 1939. In 1985 the Catholic fraternal group has 205 members.

4/16/37 District Scouter Myrlin Johnson announces that Harlingen is but $100 short of its quota of $1,250 set as part of the $11,000 fund raising campaign to continue scouting in the Valley. Paul G. Greenwood, local attorney, is finance chairman of the drive.

1938 The Harlingen Cubs, a semi-pro team in the Texas Valley League, is originated. Other cities in the six team league are Corpus Christi, Refugio, Taft, Brownsville, and McAllen. In a championship play-off with Corpus which came in first in the 155 games standings, Harlingen captures the pennant.

Mrs. G.M. Lozano and 13 other Hispanic women organize the Bougainvillea (garden) Club.

4/38 In 1918 the Girl Reserves had been established to offer patriotic support for the war effort. It was promoted by the World Young Women's Association (YWCA). In this month Girl Reserves groups across the Valley were solicited for funds to erect an outdoor fireplace to honor Miss Paul Hill who had done so much for the organization.

7/19/38 The Harlingen Day Nursery chartered in 1937 and sponsored by the Business and Professional Women's Club, Mrs. J. M. Mothershead, chairman, opens its new building in Bowie Park. It can accommodate 30 children. Mrs. Julia Knowles is in charge of the nursery which has moved from its Harrison Street location. In the 1950s it will operate in the Old Casa Building in Diaz Park.

1939-40 The Harlingen Fine Arts Club sponsors four plays each year for the children of the Valley. The Clare Tree Major Little Theater Plays presented at the municipal auditorium include Robin Hood, Hansel and Gretel, Alice in Wonderland, and Hans Brinker.

1939 This year was when Winter Texans first banded together, this being at the patio of the Madison Hotel. From this gathering would evolve the Harlingen Tourist Club.

Miscellaneous
1930-34 A Valley resident since 1930, C.W. Blackwell has a flying school in the area. Mr. and Mrs. O.N. Joyner's daughter Evelyn is one of his students and is considered to be the youngest woman pilot in the country. After she earns a flying license, her father purchases a plane. Blackwell makes most of his living with his pioneer agricultural dusting service and will manager the old Harlingen Airport for a number of years. At age 67 on 5/15/59 Blackwell passes.

1930 The Interstate Directory Company of Springfield, MO publishes one of the first comprehensive telephone directories of Harlingen. It has occupations, number of children under 18, and much more useful information. By 1935 the Wilmot Publishing Company of Mission will take up the reins and continue thru at least 1971. It also handles other Valley cities. In 1966 however it is becomes a division of Johnson Publishing Co., Odessa. By 1938 the publisher, Benjamin A. Wilmot and his wife Nannie Belle are residing at 909 E. Tyler. Around 1936 the Rio Grande Telephone Co. compiled its own directory, but it wasn't as inclusive with information.

1/12 A six event automobile race is conducted at the Fair Ground. Mid-Winter Fair Association manager and secretary John Floore also becomes secretary of the Chamber of Commerce.

1/14 Harlingen to host a Western League baseball team together with teams from San Benito, Mission, and McAllen. The season opening game is scheduled for March 19. Harlingen businessmen have put up a $3,000 guarantee. The Des Moines, Iowa team will hold spring practice here. Other out-of-state teams in the league are Wichita, Omaha, and Denver.

4/27 Casino Park, a 20 acre private enterprise between Harlingen and San Benito on the San Benito Highway, advertises its pool, picnic grounds, and dancing.

11/23 25,000 people throng Harlingen streets for the opening of the Winter Mid-Valley Fair.

9/4/30 200-300 amateur and professional golfers gather for the formal opening and dedication of the $140,000 Harlingen Municipal Golf Course to be followed by a 6-day Pro Golfers Association tournament. The course of 6,360 yard has 120 sand traps, numerous bunkers, and three artificial lakes together with a $10,000 stucco caddy house.

11/26/30 The 9th annual Valley Mid-Winter Fair opens for a four day run.

1931 In this year the Harlingen Ladds debut minor league play in Harlingen as part of the Rio Grande Valley League. This Class D team existed for only one season. Charles F. C. Ladd was then publicizing his development of the Adams Gardens area. By 1938 it was the Harlingen Hubs who were playing in the Texas Valley League. Again the team operated for only one season.

11/31 Following the Mid-Winter Fair a concessionaire remarks that the John Francis Show provides "one of the biggest dates that the firm ever played and not only outgrossed its previous engagement but broke all records there." The fair set a new attendance record of over 100,000 people. Free gate admission may have helped produce this number.

1931-32 In large measure due to the athletic prowess of Jimmy Lawrence, Harlingen wins the district football title two years running. This 1931 graduate goes on to Texas Christian University where in 1935 the 180 lb. top rusher and co-captain leads the school
to #1 rank in the nation and culminates with a 3 to 2 victory over LSU in the Sugar Bowl. The All-Southwest Conference player then goes on to play professional football with the Chicago Cardinals, 1936-39, and Green Bay Packers, 1939. On 8/21/85, the 72 year old is inducted into TCU's Letterman's Hall of Fame.


1932 The first Lower Rio Grande Valley Men's Amateur (golf) tournament is held and won by Hill Cocke. Three years later the first Lower Rio Grande Valley Lady's Tournament will be held and won by Mrs. A.E. McClendon.

7/32 Florence Bell, who came to the Harlingen area in 1903 with her father Dr. Bell, affirms that Harlingen was named for the grandmother of Col. Uriah Lott, the individual who helped bring the railroad to the Valley.

7/4/33 A major Independence Day parade and celebration is conducted, the first in 10 years.

7/33 The American Legion Hall at 300 W. Jackson is the venue for numerous boxing and wrestling events.

8/19/33 The Harlingen Community League and Harlingen host Founders's Day with a mile long parade, rodeo, reunion of pioneers, a banquet for 500 at the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel, a dance, and prizes. 20,000 are said to attend the events. The day opens with arrival of an historic steam locomotive. Father Noonan leads the parade dressed as Padre Olmos. In the parade ranch owners, cowboys, Indians, covered wagons, old ox carts, water wagons (barrel type), 100 horses and ponies portray the pioneer era. Decorated floats and autos winding up with the crack fire department fleet comprise the modern era. Lon C. Hill, at age 70, is singled out for honors. Brownsville attorney and historian Harbert Davenport is principal speaker.

9/1/33 At the Acadia Theater Miss Harlingen will be chosen by popular applause. The lucky miss will receive a silver loving cup and other prizes.

With the end of prohibition Cameron County opts to go wet. Beer is once again legal but with many state restrictions.

9/4-5/33 A powerful hurricane moves inland past Brownsville. Wind velocities are measured at 106 mph before an anemometer is blown away; gusts are estimated to have reached 125 mph. On the Sunday evening after 7 pm some winds may even have reached 135 mph. Forty people are killed and 500 injured across the region. Eighteen die in Cameron County including seven in Rio Hondo. Most of the citrus crop in the Lower Rio Grande Valley is ruined. The damage everywhere is devastating. There is considerable structural damage throughout the city. The rear half of the Municipal Auditorium is torn off. In the same area the Administration Building of the Valley Mid-Winter Fair is destroyed as is its Exhibition Hall, and the nearby grandstand. In the city 600 are left homeless.

The Sept. 8 issue of The Light (San Antonio) has a front page photo of the destroyed auditorium and an extensive list of Harlingen residents and their injuries. Assistance rendered by Fort Sam Houston medical units is noted.
1935  In continuing to civilize this area, dance instructor Markoleta Elstner has instructional studios of dance for young women in Harlingen, San Benito, and Mercedes.

5/6/36 Mrs N.B. Lackland proposes to the Harlingen Garden Club that it help to initiate the Bougainvillea Trail of Texas. The club accepts, and she is made chairman of the project. In September, 25 to 30 of these ornamentals are planted in Fair Park. By March 1941 a trail of bougainvillea extends from Laredo to Brownsville, inaugurating it as the longest trail of flowers in the world.

11/1/36 Construction begins on a horse-racing track at Fair Park to allow for a ten-day December meet.

11/36 Stunt pilot "Reckless" Rex Murphy is in town to stage a crash of his plane for Mid-Winter Fair attendees. While here he borrows a plane to search the El Suaz Division of the King Ranch for missing San Perlita poachers, John and Luther Blanton. Neither the men nor their bodies were ever recovered.

1938  This year the professional Texas Valley League was inaugurated with six teams. They were the Harlingen Hubs, McAllen Palms, Corpus Christi Spudders, Taft Cardinals, Refugio Oilers, and Brownsville Charros. The league's 140 game daylight schedule commenced on April 14, 1938. When it concluded there was to be no second year for the league, for attendance at some of the parks, especially in Brownsville, had been sparse and when this team folded so did the league.

4/11/38 This is the date scheduled for an 8 P.M. Public Mass Meeting at the Fair Ground Auditorium, Harlingen. Hon. Gordon Griffin of McAllen is one of the organizers pushing for South Texas as the 49th State as described in the publicity brochure.

6/29/38 A First Day Cover Arroyo Colorado Barge Canal from Harlingen, Texas to Deep Water Ports is issued for the first mail posted by boat June 29, 1938. It also states"Harlingen is the Distribution Center for the rich Rio Grande Valley production area of World's Finest Grapefruit."

7/19/38 The Harlingen Day Nursery Building, a frame and stucco structure, is completed in Bowie Park. The building will care for 30 children.

3/16/39 Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt is in Harlingen to deliver two lectures sponsored by the American Legion.

1939-42  In this period photographers for the Farm Security Administration were working in the Valley to document what conditions were and what the federal government was doing to alleviate poverty. All three FSA photographers who worked here to gain fame in later years. They were Arthur Rothstein, Russell Lee, and John Vachon. To view 141 Harlingen area photographs on the internet go to www.loc.gov Search Farm Security Administration- Office of War Information Photograph Collection. Click on using the collection, and 20. Farm Security Administration-Office of War Information, information black and white negatives then Harlingen search.