

## Decade 1920 to 1929

### Development

1920 The official U.S. Census places Harlingen's population at 1,784. The total for all of Precinct 6 which includes both Harlingen and La Feria is 5,932. It was only 686 in 1900 and even dropped to 569 by 1910. The inhabitants are mainly rural.

11/30/20 Reasons are offered in the *Harlingen Star* for the setbacks and obstacles delaying the building of the Baptist Sanitarium in Harlingen.

1920-1939 As the professional people of Harlingen become more affluent, the city's first suburb develops just southeast of the business district. Substantial and beautiful houses are constructed on Taylor Street along the so-called "silk stocking row." These include: The pink-colored Southern Colonial brick built by L.W. Hoskins in 1921(1925?) at 614 E. Taylor. Hoskins developed the neighborhood along with Miller Harwood. In 1926 the house was occupied by attorney Emery Polk Hornaday II and his wife Lucille, who was principal of Austin School. Hornaday was elected in a special election to the 39th State House of Representatives and then served in the 40th and 41th, and his son Emery, who would later attend TCU, was state mascot for one year. He was city attorney for six years and served on the Charter Commission. A daughter was to marry famous magician, Harry Blackstone, Jr.

In 1925 Dr. and Mrs. J.M. Green construct the two-story Prairie Style house at 822 E. Taylor. They have been here two years. Born in Weimar, TX 11/19/87, he was educated at Northwestern U. in Chicago. He married Ruth Rylander 1/5/14. He is in investments and real estate. This Baptist is also a Rotarian, city commissioner of streets, and will have an office in the lobby of the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel. By 1930 the house is occupied by Tyre H. Brown and his family.

The Wyricks, who move here in 1923, are by 1945 to own this property. They remove much overgrown vegetation to return the property's looks to its original simplicity; The Italian villa style home built by W.T. Liston at 613 E. Taylor is for Oscar Nathan Joyner and his wife Anne Evelyn. The house was built in late 1925 and early 1926 for the Joyners who had come to Harlingen in 1919 from Rosdale, TX. The house has 10' ceilings with steel beam reinforcing, 2' deep outside walls, tile roof, and windows of ¾" automobile glass. The Joyner's lived in an apartment over its garage while the main house was being built. Being very attractive it was featured on a post card circulated to promote the city. Mr. Joyner became the first Valley agent for the Texas Co. (Texaco) and will later own the Joyner Oil Company. The house was modeled on Boca Raton, FL homes designed by Addison Mizner, a famous architect of the day. The Joyner family owned it to the early 1980s when the new owner completely restored it. O.N. Joyner was born in Rockdale, TX on 9/1/91 and attended high school there. He married Annie E. McCalla on 7/15/13. They came to Harlingen 7/26/19. This Presbyterian member was also a Mason and Shriner;

At 902 is the 1926 Spanish Colonial Revival home of Mr. and Mrs. B. Manning Holland. At 617 E. Taylor is the Georgian style 1927 home of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Franklin Johnson. He is a banker;

The first Harlingen Ford automobile dealer Bob Hollingsworth and his wife own the 1927 Georgian brick mansion built at a cost of \$28,000 at 701 Taylor in the Castle Court

Addition. It boasted Harlingen's first private swimming pool, a concrete one 40'x60', along with two tennis courts. In 1935 it was purchased by real estate developer Sid Berly and his wife;

Around 1928 William L. (Bill) Trammel moves into the English stone house at 1022. He was owner, president and general manager of the Valley Baking Company and later was in top management with the Holsum Baking Company here;

At 618 Mr. and Mrs. Hoskins own their own two story timber frame Georgian style house which they build in 1929. In the 1940s the home is purchased by Mr. and Mrs. McHenry Tichenor;

At 717 Taylor Josephine and Fred Flynn own the 1929 Spanish stucco house until 1957; In 1930 John and Ruth Townsend build a two story brick Palladian-style Italian villa. It originally had a blue tile roof and still retains Austrian glass chandeliers, ornate plaster moldings, a stained glass window, spiral entry columns, and parquet and oak floors. A few months after its completion it is purchased by Howard E. Butt founder of the H.E.B. grocery chain. He added the tennis courts on the west side. Mr. Butt assisted greatly in developing the new Valley Baptist Hospital, the Harlingen Public Library, with boy scouting, in the establishment of the TB Hospital here, and donated the original building housing the RGV Museum. Howard and Mary Butt live in the house until 1940 when they move to Corpus Christi. They retain the house until 1943. In the year 2000 the Texas State Historical Commission authorized a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark plaque for the house. It was erected in January 2004;

At 917 E. Taylor John and Anne Morris live in their 1930 two story Spanish Colonial stucco house. It has solid wood-hewn beams in its living room. He is a produce buyer, packer, and shipper. It remained in the family until 1968. The house is now owned by Attorney Graham McCullough and his wife Anne;

In the early 30s Mr. and Mrs. Grafton Burdette live in a two story Southern Colonial frame home at 905 E. Taylor. He is a mortician and owner of Kriedler-Ashcraft Funeral home;

Under construction for R.L. and Ola Hill as the Hurricane of 1933 strikes is a Spanish Colonial Revival home at 1102 Taylor. It has notable architectural elements including arched doorways, and windows and a hand-carved front door. The panels of the mesquite door show brush as the explorers found it here, ranch scenes, brush clearing and the introduction of water, and citrus and palm trees. Eleanor Roosevelt was entertained here as was Gov. W. Lee O'Daniel. The Hills had come to Texas in 1926 from Stroud, OK and Harlingen two years later. He was born in Lowell, Indiana, 8/13/90, and she was from Oklahoma. He ran the ice plant partnership with J.B. Morton of McAllen, and they have prosperous branches across the Valley. He is also to be a partner with H. E. Butt in constructing the huge food processing factory at F Street and West Jackson; later he is its president as well as a vice president of the First National Bank and active on the school board. He owned the Commerce Building as well as property on Jackson Street. Struck suddenly with appendicitis in December 1941, Robert Luther Hill is to die at age 50 leaving a wife and two daughters. A surviving daughter in 2005 is Mrs. Betty Nickell. The house's subsequent owners are Walter Archelaus Hext and his wife Lillie M. (1949 or 1950 to 1968). He was a cotton farmer here from the late 1930s and later owned the W.A. Hext and Sons Gin, Inc. in Combes. Leonard D. and Flora Levine next occupied the house from about 1972 until 1988 or 1989. He was a partner in The Man's Shop and

managed Hartogs. Ervin Burton was in the house by 1990 and there until 1995-96. Dr. Aldolfo Rama and his wife Clarissa are to restore and beautifully decorate the premise by 2004 and then open Casa Rama, a bed and breakfast enterprise.

Added in 1933 or 34 is Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Teas' 602 E. Taylor Mexican hacienda style home;

It was in 1935 that the home at 721 was built by William E. Armstrong for Thomas Read Williams, Sr. and his wife, Jimmie Davis Williams. It is a Georgian style frame house. Williams, who came here in 1925, was a pharmacist and opened the Rio Grande Pharmacy on the ground floor of the Baxter Building in 1929;

At 702 E. Taylor, J. Lewis and Maude Boggus construct a Southern Colonial frame house for \$9,000 in 1939. Boggus had come to the Valley in 1917, soon setting up a dealership in McAllen before coming to Harlingen two years later. Here he has both Ford and Lincoln-Mercury dealerships, was president of the C of C and promoted highways and schools. The city's largest stadium, east of Memorial Middle School, is named in his honor after his death in 1966. The house is sold in the late 1940s. Forrest Runnels, one of the founders of Tropical Savings and Loan Co. and the Valley Beverage Co. is later to own it.

1920 Sid Berly is attracted to the Valley. He is a native of Mansfield, LA having been born there 8/23/96 to a father, C.J., who was a stockraiser. Berly was to marry Marion Elizabeth Walker of Lake Charles on 3/18/17. They had one daughter who was given the same name as her mother. Although he studied law for two years he never completed his studies. Instead he became a representative for the Willys-Knight Motor Co. As president and general manager of Valley Properties, Inc. located in the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel he becomes a potent factor in the development of both agricultural and city land in the Valley, especially around Harlingen. In 1926 he is a partner with the Anglin Brothers in a real estate firm. He serves as Chamber of Commerce president in 1946-47 and is a Rotary member. In 1952 he is president of Adams Gardens.

This same year J.B. Chambers, Sr. and later his sons J.B. Chambers, Jr. and C.H. Chambers become developers of real estate with the J.B. Chambers Realty Company of Harlingen, "the gateway to the rich lower valley."

1920s (early) The Briggs-Coleman Tract is developed. This area north of the airport covers 3,000 acres and is named after the pioneer Harlingen businessmen who bought part of the virgin area. As late as 1961 it was sparsely populated with 42 families and 200 people. In this year the area people had met monthly on the first day of the month since 1924 at the school (on FM 507) for a covered-dish potluck.

1920 (fall) This is the period that 17 year old Vance Delone Raimond treks 550 miles in a covered wagon from Converse, LA. With his parents, one brother and five sisters, they journey to the Valley because the year before his father, enticed by the Al Parker Land and Development Co., has purchased 15 acres north of Santa Rosa. They farm it and prove unsuccessful in this endeavor. Moving on to La Feria his father takes jobs as city secretary and town barber. From his father Vance learns the municipal bond business. Born 2/2/03, Vance is to marry Mary Lee Scott in 1930 after she has come here with her family from Madison IN. They move to Harlingen in the 1940s when Vance and two partners establish the Harlingen Airfield Bus Company which is to grow over the decades into the Valley Transit Co. He will eventually become its president and sole owner.

Vance was a Mason, Shriner, Kiwanis, Rotarian, and First Methodist Church member. He was port director of the Arroyo Colorado Navigation District, served the Red Cross, American Heart Assoc., Boy Scouts and numerous trade organizations. In 1996 he was 93 years young. In honor of their service and contributions the Boy Scout District headquarters on Expressway 83 west of Harlingen is named the Vance D. and Mary Lee Raimond Scout Center.

10/30/20 The St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway Company assigns for \$1.00 a year a lot to the Better Harlingen Club. The 115' x 350' lot is north of the railway depot on then East Street, later N. Commerce. It lies next to the tracks between Jackson and Van Buren and is to be beautified into a park-like setting.

1921 Widespread unemployment of returning Great War veterans is one contributing factor to an economic depression across the country this year.

9/17/21 The city goes on full twenty-four hour electric service.

6/2/21 Lon C. Hill, Jr. is busy growing a crop of tomatoes while his father is traveling in southern Mexico.

6/8/22 In the Lee Land Tract, land is being leased for oil and gas exploration, but 5,000 acres are needed before a driller will come in.

1925 The Harlingen Development Company with Osco Morris as president, J.R. Roberts, vice president and S. Finley Ewing secretary-treasurer advertises it capital stock at over \$100,000. More importantly it is trying to unload numerous unsold city lots. It offers 300 homesite lots east of the concrete highway (F Street) with 50 foot frontages at \$500 for a corner lot and \$450 for an inside one. All are part of the Original Townsite of Harlingen.

8/11/26 A full page ad is taken in the *Harlingen Morning Star* to welcome the Southern Pacific Railroad Company and its officials to the city.

8/20/26 The Chamber of Commerce endorses A.F. Parker's proposal for a channel up the Arroyo Colorado to Harlingen. \$100,000 is sought, perhaps by assessing \$1 per acre from land owners. Parker, a major land developer, donates \$16,500. On 12/6/27, \$500,000 of the new Arroyo Colorado Navigation District bonds are offered. They attract a premium price, according to J.B. Chambers, chairman of the newly created district.

10/1/26 Spanish Acres subdivision with 233 opens. It is on the Harlingen-Combes Highway. John S. Nelson and J.L. Farren are principles. With six streets, no city utilities are yet available for it.

This year there are a number of Harlingen real estate dealers pushing land sales. These include the O.P. Storm Company which promotes "22 years knowing the Valley and Valley values", Svadlenak and Pierce in the Turney Building, John D. Hill and C.D. Hanson, Eubanks and Pitcock, W.H. Starbuck and Company, and the Association of Real Estate Boards having J.B. Chambers as president and T.M. Dobson as secretary.

1926-27 The Southern Pacific Railroad through its interlocking subsidiary, the Texas and New Orleans Railroad with its San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway, completes its

135 mile line from Falfurrias to Edinburg. On 2/15/27 the tracks reach the city and on 3/10/27 the line is operational to Harlingen. In June work begins to extend the line to Brownsville and on 10/21/27 the work train reaches there with a freight one to follow the next day. On 11/10/27 Brownsville passenger service commences. W.L. Hollingsworth, who was a conductor for the SP on its first trip to Brownsville, is also on the last trip of the SP connection of daily passenger service from Brownsville to McAllen in the 1950s. It isn't until 1941 that the railroad irons out legal problems brought about by the voting of a bond issue for a Brownsville bonus for the railroad. Since it was impossible for the city to vote bonds for station property, "park" bonds were issued. The so-called park extended from the station to the old Brownsville city limits at Paredes Line Road.

1926-28 S. Finley (Finn) Ewing is Mayor. Born 6/22/75 the son of a Presbyterian minister in San Angelo, he studied at UT. He served 18 months in the army in WWI before marrying Ada McLendon on 1/19/19. He helped to organize the Valley Mid-Winter Fair Association. He is active in the American Legion, twice being commander and served as Rotary Club president. As one of the city fathers he pushed to have planking erected at street crossings. He ran for office on the slogan "Progress with Cooperation." Mrs. Ewing is to be active in the Presbyterian Church and other organizations. During WWII he will be president of the Brownsville Shipbuilding Corp. It manufactures craft for the military services.

8/6/26 Pritchard, Tait, and Pittman offer 24 lots with citrus on them north on Fordyce just beyond the city limits. The neighboring owner, J.W. Ingram, then offers 12 acres more.

9/24/26 N.H. Windsor, owner of land just east of East Harrison, opens the New Windsor Place addition of 47 acres and lets it be known that the street pavement will be extended to the property.

1/4/27 The first trainload dedicated only to the transport of cement is unloaded in Harlingen. The fifty cars are an indication of Valley growth.

1/11/27 700 tourists/potential land buyers arrive in Harlingen. Eighteen land companies have brought them here.

1/18/27 Harry Kapneck, an associate of Morris Epstein, electrical supplier of Washington, reveals the \$12,500 purchase of acreage from George Corres and Frank Svadlenak. at the east end of Harrison. Plans are to construct 45 modern homes. Initially 30 Spanish style homes will be put up at a projected total cost of \$250,000. This will be called Washington Park.

2/18/27 With the Southern Pacific rail lines now laid through the area, land sales begin. Being the first SP station (5 miles northwest) out of Harlingen, it is named Primera. It is promoted by the Delta Development Co. of Weslaco for its fine water at a shallow depth of 22" and the two story Wilson School. Four hundred business lots are offered as well as 100 residential ones.

Mayor Ewing directs the Intercoastal Canal Association, and it holds its 1927 convention in Harlingen. He convinces the Association to back Hill's plan to dredge the Arroyo Colorado.

9/23/27 Otto Vinke advertises three lots for sale in Windsor Place along the canal and facing E. Harrison. He wants \$3,000 for all.

This year the Arroyo Colorado Navigation District is created when a \$500,000 bond issue is approved. A second bond issue for \$625,000 will be approved in 1946, making the total indebtedness \$1,125,000. By 1958 when Clifford Purdy is chairman of the board, the total has been reduced to \$404,000. The original area tax was 60¢ per \$100 valuation but drops to 30¢ by 1959.

This year also, the light and water systems finally see a profit. The city licenses town buses, and a line opens between Harlingen and Raymondville.

1928 Natural gas is brought to the city from nearby gas fields. By 7/17/28 a large ad appears for gas installation in homes for gas stoves, water heaters, gas fireplace logs, etc. By 1936 Harlingen has more domestic gas connections (1,644) than any other Valley city.

1928 The population has risen to 13,500. Hotels in town have the following capacities: Gateway 29, Madison 110, Reese-Wil-Mond 130, and Travelers (112 ½ W.Jackson) 27. The two banks operating have a total of \$1,618,719 in deposits. 1929. Central Power and Light Company's Department of Industrial Development summarizes Harlingen's progress. It notes the city possessing eight parks, three theaters, twelve churches, two high schools, one junior high school, and three elementary schools, plus one school for Hispanics and one for blacks. Twenty-four miles of paved streets are credited to the city along with 49 miles of sanitary sewers, 47 ½ miles of storm drains and 47 ½ miles of water mains. The city is attributed to have 1,759 telephones and to have issued \$347, 540 value of building permits.

Sam Botts, who served on the City Commission 4/19-12/28, becomes mayor in 12/28 and is in office to the end of 1936, his administration is similar to Ewing's in that it has drive, integrity, idealism, and the business know-how. Botts came from Bottsville in Central Texas near Gonzales. He set up a store, a cotton gin and operated Botts Produce Co. He was involved in the Valley Mid-Winter Fair and chairman of the board of the First Methodist Church. It was his motion under Mayor Ewing that the city voted not to charge churches a building fee. Under him, air passenger service was established at the relatively primitive municipal airport whose location was the south end of the present-day golf course.

1/7/28 T.D. and Rose Wallace plat the Wallace's Home Lawn subdivision. It was west of the F Street Bridge between the Arroyo Colorado and Rangerville Blvd. (Road). It has more than 86 lots of 140' x 50' plus six lots of 38 acres or more. The streets in it named Oleander, Canna, and Rose will later be renamed King, Knox, Lamb, and La Salle.

7/31/28 The telephone company increases its line capacity by 300 bringing the installed capacity to 1,240.

8/18/28 Southern Pacific adds 2000 feet of tracks in the city bringing its total to five miles. With its new passenger depot it has about \$600,000 invested here.

9/4/28 There is considerable public support and agitation to dredge at least a 9 foot deep channel at the mouth of the Arroyo Colorado and make a cut through a South Padre Island in order to move to making Harlingen a deep water port. It is endorsed by former Corps of Engineer chief Gen. Lansing. [Nothing will come of this.]

9/23/28 The *San Angelo Standard Times* comments on the Harlingen promotional slogan "Harlingen Wants You!" First used in 1926, it has gone into paid newspaper ads, radio,

Sunday supplements, and magazines. The Times showed pictures of Harlingen landmarks including the rancho style house with a tower later owned by the Listons.

9/25/28 In an editorial the *Harlingen Star* lists objectives for Harlingen. They are:

Continuation of municipal program of expansion and development;

Cannery operating by the end of the year;

Cotton mill now under construction in operation at least by the end of the year;

Location of several industries here as a result of board of development;

Continued harmony in municipal affairs and cooperation in building of city;

Paved highway north to county line;

Dredging Arroyo Colorado canal channel in six months;

50,000 population in five years;

Federal building for Harlingen on site furnished by the city;

Prosperity for farmers as a result of reasonable prices for their produce.

At the end of the decade Harlingen is developing in all four directions though sales may be erratic. The table shows the various additions:

East	West	North	South
Nicholson Place	Commercial Heights	Lake Side Heights	Harlingen Land & Investment Company.
Clara Pierce	Park View	Lake View	Ebony Heights
Nicholson	Brown	Lake Cove	Brooks Lawn
Taylor	Laurelhurst	Shaw	Austin
Nichols & Howell	Svadlenak & Corris	Hornaday	Johnston Acres
Miller	West End	Powell	
Otto	Lockhart	Newton	
Marriott	R.W.Nelson	Pottinger	
Pollard	Benoist		
Francis	Brown		
Beasley	Carlton		
Castle Court Annex	Colonia Mitchell		
La Quinta	Scott		
Arroyo Vista	Eells		
Fitch	Place		
Barton			
Scheele			
East End			
Anglin			

9/30/28 Proposals are made to construct a parallel road with a new bridge across the Arroyo Colorado in order to facilitate movement between Harlingen and San Benito. It will take until the 1950s for this to take place.

The Metropolitan Investment Corp. places a full-page ad in the *Harlingen Star*. It promotes the Laurelhurst Addition "Where West Jackson meets West Harrison—the new business district of greater Harlingen."

By mid-October of this year O.E. Stuart had taken over the old Valley Realty Company.

11/22/28 J.A. Seagrove in a letter to the editor details the high costs of Arroyo Colorado, Laguna Madre, and South Padre Island dredging to effect the Arroyo Colorado Navigation District's plan to access Harlingen.

11/26/28 The Finwood Corp., developers of Finwood Heights having "Over a Mile of Water Front" are advertising a large number of homesites. [These are east of the current Wood Park.]

Early in 1929 the Valley Developments, Inc., based in Harlingen, spends considerable money in publicizing Valley real estate and agricultural potential. It publishes photographs of enticing Valley ranches, buildings, schools, aerial views, etc. Its personnel include: H.H. Roddy, president; R. Lee Kempner (of the Imperial Sugar Company family), vice-president; J.M. Kopp, secretary; David B. Traxler, sales director; and R.A. Rose, manager service department. In mid-October 1928 Wimberly McLeod had been president, Roddy a vp, J.C. Woodworth, secretary and George E. Phillips, assistant secretary. Potential buyers are housed in the club house amidst citrus groves at Schaff's Ranch (Dr. Wilson's old property in the Primera area) west of Harlingen.

1/13/29 The Harlingen Arroyo Park development deal is halted when opponents of its plan are granted an injunction.

1/21/29-2/4/29 The MP and SP Railroads put on extra cars to bring in a surge of homeseekers visiting the Valley via Harlingen. Over a three-week period over 3,700 people arrive.

11/4 The telephone directory puts Harlingen's population at 11,071, 6,440 of whom it characterizes as American, 1,486 English-speaking Mexicans, 2,792 Mexicans, and 353 Negroes.

12/31 Postal receipts for 1929 are 11% higher than those of 1928. Lon C. Hill's nursery has 4,000 tepejehua trees that he has started to beautify Valley highways.

### **Agriculture/Ranching**

11/1920 After viewing the land offered for sale wheat farmer Joseph J. Garrett comes back to the Harlingen area where he takes up farming southwest of town. He and his family have taken 11 days to travel from Wakita, Oklahoma to the Valley. He is the oldest resident of the area as attested by the fact that Judge Dancy names Garrett Road after him. Wed 10/2/01, he and his wife Grace will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary in October 1961. Their adopted daughter upon marriage to Talmadge will become Mrs. Ruth Franklin whose mentally challenged son is Dwayne. J.J., who was vice-president of the Stuart Place School school board when it first commenced in 1923, is to die in 1967 and Grace in 1971. Both are buried in Restlawn Memorial Cemetery near La Feria.

Traveling with the Garrett family is Wakita businessman Charles Rollie Guthrie, his wife Maude Edna Thompson Guthrie, 15 year old Viola born in a log cabin at Dillon, Colorado and perhaps her some of her siblings including brothers Floyd and Leonard and sisters Geneviere and Juanita. Having moved to Oklahoma in 1910 the family left Wakita, OK to come to the Valley and settle on land purchased in Stuart Place. Viola, one brother and her sisters attended the Stuart Place School where Viola was among those in the first graduating class of the school in 1924. On the 75th anniversary of the



school in March 1999 she was honored as the only surviving member of her class. She went on to San Marcos Teachers College and Texas A & I University, teaching first graders back in the Stuart Place school for three years upon being graduated. She married Clovis E. Johnson on 4/17/34 in Raymondville. He was to die in 1970 as would all of Viola's siblings before she succumbed at age 99 on 2/24/05. She had no children but did have numerous nieces and nephews. She worked at Montgomery Ward, the St. Paul Lutheran Church and the Judy-Lin Motel, and was a member of the Church of Christ as well as the Valley Baptist Hospital Auxiliary. Descendents Matthew and Catherine Weber, great-great grandchildren, of Charles and Maude still live on the original farm property.

It is the fall of this year that Oyer Robert Burns and his wife Nora Belle Hitt Burns together with their children O.J., Ethelene, and Ray move to the Stuart Place area. They had been married in 1911. Five more of their children were to be born there. Also coming with them were Mr. Burn's brothers Clyde and Troy and his nephew Landers Walker. They had shipped all of their possessions here by rail. These included horses, cows, hogs, chickens and one billy goat. Oyer was employed by the Stuart Land Company as a foreman in charge of land clearing and preparation of farm plots. Large plows pulled by eight mules were used to turn the soil. The laborers were primarily "wetbacks." It was in 1925 that the Burns planted trees along Fair Park Drive, Harlingen in order to beautify the area. For sixteen years the Burns lived in company housing. When Oyer retired he built a home on his son Frank's ranch in Primera near the Wilson School. While he died in 1957, his wife who was born in Tyler on 1/24/1891, would live on to celebrate her 95th birthday in 1986.

It is 1920 when the Valley Gin Company is organized by G.C. Henson, John T. Lomax, and H.P. Boyd and based in San Benito. It grows until 22 gins are in the organization. In the 30s it attempts to go into bankruptcy, but this is denied by Judge T.M. Kennerly, and the \$200,000 corporation company goes into the hands of new stockholders, W.P. Lincoln, pres., Claude Carter, sec.-treasurer, Lloyd Stiernberg, Isaac M. Williams, and Mrs. S.W. Sibley. Its offices are moved to Harlingen.

12/20 H.L. Oler of Harlingen's American Legion Post, and owner of a Harlingen insurance company, speaks before a crowd of 200 in Brownsville. His message is clear: he wants no more Japanese coming to the Valley He would accomplish this aim with intimidation, physical if necessary. Two weeks later this threat is put into practice. In January 1921 when two Japanese families from California arrive by train at the Harlingen station they are met by a crowd of people and told in no uncertain terms that they are not welcome. Shocked by this reception, the Japanese families immediately move on. Soon thereafter, following California's lead a state senate bill is introduced which would prevent all Japanese immigrants from owning or leasing land in the state. After some lobbying by Texas Japanese, an amendment is added that in effect exempts all Japanese then living in the state. In 1926 for his insurance company, Oler advertises "We pay cash for ashes."

11/30/20 There is a public auction of animals and farm implements at the Ross Farm, John J. Ahern, owner. It is located in the Wilson Tract 1 mile north, 3 miles west of Harlingen on the main road. Not too distant from here L. E. Snavelly is advertising his La Bonita Nursery.

1921 (spring) In what is termed an "offseason" Harlingen area farmers still ship 583 solid carloads from the city. Shipped are tomatoes, beans, beets, carrots, onions, green corn, squash, spinach, peppers, cucumbers, and cantaloupes. Freight and passenger revenues for Harlingen Station during 1920 were \$568,000.

O'Hea Brothers, the heaviest buyers of cotton in the U.S. for export to England, have their office in Harlingen.

Advertising orange, lemon, lime, and grapefruit trees for sale is Dorton's Southwest Nurseries.

6/24/21 The Harlingen Farmers Cooperative Society is said to have had a successful season even though there has been considerable opposition to its existence. There exists an extreme low price for cabbage.

11/11/21 CCWD to lower irrigation water rates:

1921 \$240,000 budget \$4.50/acre annual flat rate plus \$2.50/acre per irrigation

1922 \$150,000 budget \$2.50/acre annual flat rate plus \$1.25/acre per irrigation.

This was because wartime and postwar fuel prices had come down.

1921 Citrus shipments this year are above 20,000,000 boxes and remain in this vicinity until the freeze year of 1949 after which they dip to 14,000,000.

Coming in 1921 from Bishop, TX were Joseph Willie and Gertrude Grant Williams. Mr. Williams, a blacksmith by trade, had bought 25 acres in the Lon C. Hill subdivision south of Harlingen in 1920 and wanted to change his line of work. He farmed the land and grew citrus to be sold on the streets of Harlingen. He is to die at age 92 on 10/17/61 leaving his wife Gertrude and daughter Mildred. Daughter Grace, who was born 11/30/05 in Barry, TX, attended Central Ward for her senior year and was graduated in 1922. She would marry Henry A. Ferguson on 10/7/25 and live all over Texas before she returned here in 1984. At age 98 on 3/1/04 this active First Methodist member would pass from this life. Sister, Zora Mildred, would be graduated in 1937, work at the high school for three years, be an assistant librarian in the public library during WWII, and then Nursery Supervisor at the Farm Security Administration's labor camp on Rangerville Road. She married Russell J. Bennett, Sr. in 1947, received a teaching degree in 1970 and a masters in 1976. She retired in 1988.

It is also in the year 1921 that the Rio Grande Valley Development Co., an unincorporated firm, has sales offices in Harlingen and San Antonio. It pushes to sell irrigated farmland in the Harlingen district. Its officers are C.E. Tolhurst, pres., B.C. Lucas, v-p, and J.W. Lipscomb, sec.-treasurer.

1/22 C.P. Bobo and Chas. H. Brown are new members elected to the board of Cameron County Water Improvement District No. 1. The former becomes president. It is the largest turnout to-date with 174 farmers voting.

1/13/22 Mr. S.R. Jennings and his family from Shreveport arrive to occupy the farm they have purchased from O.P. Storm.

1/15/22 The Sunday edition of the *Houston Chronicle* runs a special section featuring Rio Grande Valley citrus and vegetable subjects. "Just a nurseryman", George Brwyer puts out proposal to make the Harlingen Fair valleywide.

5/24/22 A serious fire at the CCWD pumping plant causes \$5,000 worth of damage.

Two of the three pumps are untouched. The area has 5,000 acres of corn and 14,000 of cotton at present.

8/6/22 Through 7/29 about half the cotton crop is in and 6000 bales have been ginned in Harlingen—a great start.

1922 H. Raymond Mills organizes the Valley Packing Co. in Harlingen. It is the first citrus packing shed outside of the California-Florida-Arizona districts. C.B. Wood is secretary. A *Houston Chronicle* spread on Sunday 1/25/23 shows six photos of the plant including its exterior, two of grading tables, sizer and packing bins, the applicator and elevator, and where the fruit is packed. The wooden crates are labeled Valley Sweet. The plant is at N. Commerce and Washington. It packs 40 carloads in 1922 and 23 by the spring of 1923. In this year the John Shary interests purchase the machinery and move it to Sharyland, an area which will become the Valley's center for citrus culture.

It is this year that Frank and Bettie Autrey McGee move to the Wilson Tract from Lincoln Parish, LA. Accompanying them are their children Lucy, Claire, Glenn and Gertie, who comes with her husband W.A. Napper, a carpenter. Coming by train to Harlingen they bring livestock including horses, mules, cows, pigs, and chickens, and also lumber enough to construct a large barn and three houses on adjacent 20 acre blocks (now about one mile east of Bass Blvd. and just north of Wilson Road). The parcels were occupied by the senior McGees, Gertie and her husband, and Glenn and his wife Ovie Stewart McGee.

Another tract family is that of George Francis and Mary Jane Barnes Murphy who also arrived in the early 1920s. Their children are Ellis, Rufus, Oscar, Curtis, Patty Rea, Oma Lee, and Emmodell. Some members of the family return to Union County, AK after the 1933 hurricane. Ellis however is to marry Lucy McGee in 1925. It is after Claire marries Mattie Ferguson in 1930 that W.A., Frank, and Ellis build the newly weds a house on the southwest corner of Frank's parcel and just east of the Yate's farm. Frank was to add 12 acres to his 20 when the Debois family left the area.

The McGees and Nappers grew cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, peppers, onions, corn, and cotton along with livestock feed. When the Southern Pacific railroad came through in 1927-28 they profited by providing cooked food for the construction crews. In the late 1930s Glenn Murphy was to purchase a home one mile west of Primera. Gertie Napper was to teach several years at the Wilson School in the 1920s and also coach the girls' basketball teams.

Coming this year to the Briggs-Coleman area is Forrest Garling who initially purchases 20 acres. He is a native of Bellefontaine, OH having been born there 10/4/05 to L.F. and Lou Hammond Garling. By 1938 he will have expanded his farming to 1,500 acres primarily in corn, cotton and vegetables. After producing a daughter, Betty Jean, he will be divorced from his wife Grace Wheeler Garling of McKinney, TX whom he married 3/15/34.

5/23/22 The LRGV Citrus Growers Exchange is organized by O.E. Stuart, vice president of the Stuart Place Marketing Organization. 900 growers are to participate in it.

6/6/22 J. A. Hickman is selected as president of the Citrus Exchange and given a salary of \$300 a month. A. A. Thompson is its treasurer. Its offices are in Harlingen.

11/22 The Aransas Pass Compress Company announces plans for its Harlingen compress to up and running by the summer of 1923. It will be sufficient in size to handle 60,000 bales.

The Lower Rio Grande Citrus Exchange takes a full page ad in the Valley Mid-Winter Fair edition of the *San Benito Light*. J.R. Hickman, its president and manager, asks "Is It

Fair?" regarding poorly packed and graded citrus fruit competing with "Valley-Sweet" and its standard pack. He berates the competition.

12/19/22 With W.T. Hodge originating the idea, the Valley Mid-Winter Fair is officially commenced in Harlingen to celebrate and promote agriculture. In this and the next four years Bob Stuart of Stuart Place works diligently to promote the success of the fair. In a looser manner a fair was conducted in the winter of 1921 and featured a parade which would become an annual attraction. A series of post cards document the parade and its viewers. Assisting Stuart in the 1924 fair are Will G. fields, manager; Sam Botts, treasurer; Dr. J.T. Traylor, veterinarian. On the executive committee this year are John T. Lomax, S. Findlay Ewing, H. H. Burchard, R.T. Stuart, Al Parker, J.R. Roberts and Sam Botts. By 1929 when Sam Botts is Fair president and John Floore its secretary the program lists it as the Ninth Annual Fair. One *Harlingen Star* item in 1921 notes a C of C meetings concerning the fair. Held annually at the end of November or first two weeks of December, it continues annually through 1950. The week-long fair is a major event for Harlingen and opens with a festive parade. Its location by 1930 is Fair Park Blvd. near the present Municipal Auditorium. The fair then uses Lon C. Hill's spacious barn built at Fair Park for its office and headquarters. Hill constructed the barn of brick from his own brick plant on the arroyo.

In previous times a mid-winter fair had been held in Brownsville over a number of years. Harlingen's first fair was in an empty lot where the Hi-Way Inn on F Street would later stand.

In this year the Harlingen district has 1000 acres of citrus averaging 60-70 trees/acre and at age 5-6 years should produce 10 boxes of fruit per tree.

1923 Otha Alton Wyrick, around 18 years old, arrives here. This native of Emerson, AK is to become a citrus grower and cotton farmer. Over the years he is deeply involved in civic endeavors including boy scouting, serving on boards, and with the Church of Christ. When he dies in April 1986 at age 81 he leaves his wife Anna Mote, son Michael of Harlingen, and two daughters. On 12/28/05 Mrs. Wyrick, 95 years old, is to die after having lived at 822 Taylor for 60 years. Born in the Oklahoma Indian Territory she had moved to Harlingen in 1924. A member of the First Christian Church for over 75 years, she was known for her flower and gardening prowess.

This same year B. F. Morrow, a native of Nola, Arkansas, takes up farming in Rangerville. In time he will be very active in ag-related endeavors. These include Farm Bureau director 1938-1950, Producers Gin director 1942-46, organizer and president of the Rangerville Co-op Gin 1947-68, on board of directors of Abilene Christian College 1956-66, associate director Production Credit Association in the 1950s, and director of the Cameron County Water Control and Improvement District. This Rangerville Church of Christ elder is to die at age 76 on 12/23/83. He left behind his wife Lucille and three sons, one of whom is Bobby Morrow, Olympic Gold Medals recipient in track events. Charles Ladd, Wimberly McLeod, and Lon C. Hill Jr. are representing the Neill T. Masterson Holdings (general offices in Houston) in the RGV. The tract is in the Rangerville area. In the previous September 200 landseekers were at the Rangerville Clubhouse to view the section.

2/14/23 *The Harlingen Radio* Vol.1 No.32 reports an estimate that the Valley will ship 70 carloads of citrus fruit this season and together with local express shipments the total

will run to 100 or more. Twenty-five straight cars of grapefruit have been moved by the Valley Harlingen Packing plant.

4/6/23 Thirty-one carloads of vegetables leave Harlingen. Most are beets and carrots but also some cabbage.

Nurseries in the area are competitive. W. M. Ellison Citrus Nurseries advertises the availability of Marsh Seedless, Duncan, and Walters grapefruit trees, balled or bare-rooted. The La Bonita Nursery offers grapefruit, orange, peaches, plums, ornamentals, and shrubs. W.W. Jones Citrus Nurseries with outlets in Harlingen and Brownsville notes its establishment in 1916.

6/9/23 On this date Leonard Pierce Simmons (b. 8/26/96 in Lebonen, TX) marries Dora Mae Van Burkleo (b. 3/6/03 in Greer County, OK) in Brownsville. Leonard came to the Valley after serving in the Balloon Corps of the Army in World War I. His parents had migrated to the Valley because of poor farming conditions in West Texas. He was a sharecropper for a number of years, worked for the WPA during the Depression in the 1930s, and eventually through government loans, became an independent farmer between Harlingen and Rangerville. Leonard, who was to die of lung cancer at age 56 on 9/25/52 and Dora, who will die at 64 on 10/12/67, had nine children, one of whom died before one year of age. While Cecil Randall Simmons (b.10/10/34) became a physician who practiced in San Benito, Leonard Pierce (L.P.) Simmons, Jr., who was born 7/27/30 in the Valley Baptist Hospital, continued farming and enlarging the complex in which his sons Leonard Simmons III, Sam Edwards Simmons, and son-in-law Thomas McLemore play an important role in this and other farm operations. L. P. was to die at home at age 75 on November 18, 2005. Survivors are his wife Dolores (Dodie) Barnes Simmons, his sons and two married daughters. A G.N. Simmons had come to Harlingen in 1912. Whether he was a relative is unknown. This Methodist was to die at age 86 on 4/7/41.

As noted it was the previous generation of Simmons who had first come to the Valley in 1919 from Crowell, Texas. William Edwards Simmons and his wife Sally were said to have purchased a small Rangerville area farm from a disillusioned stranger who wished to return north. The price was six red hens. William and Sally's children were Leonard Pierce, Rose Price, Tennie Dubert, George, Robert, Clark, and Mary Estelle Fletcher.

1924 This year Harry and Zenobia Lafitte Hollebeak come to the Harlingen area with 11 year old daughter Mary Gertrude. They farm in the Wilson Road area. Mary will marry Raymond Lee McCarty in 1935. They celebrate their 69th anniversary in 2004. Mary becomes a registered nurse, is involved with the Daughters of the American Revolution, and is a member of the N. 7th Street Church of Christ. When she dies at age 91 on 12/27/04 she leaves behind her husband, son John McCarty, four grandchildren and four great grandchildren. A brother preceded her in death.

9/1/24 Mrs. Lee Roos, nee Bowden, comes to the ten acre Coleman farm tract as does neighbor Mrs. H. L. Young. Across the dirt road reside Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Eldridge. The price paid was \$300 an acre. The Bowdens raised citrus nursery plants until the Great Depression eliminated any market. They then grew cabbage, carrots, peppers, tomatoes, and sweet corn. The families of the Coleman Tract socialized with pot luck suppers the first Friday of the month. Traveling any great distance, especially under wet conditions, was very bothersome.

10/24 H.P. Pittman of Cotulla arrives in Valley to commence bedding up 100 acres for onion culture at Stuart Place. He is a member of the firm Pittman Brothers that operate the Lower Valley Plant Company.

1/25 An assessment of the December freeze reveals a 15% loss of the Valley grapefruit crop and 25% for oranges.

2/27/25 Charles Edward Rickard, an Illinois native, locates in Corpus Christi but by this date comes from Cape Girardeau, MO to become a Harlingen resident. Before 1930 he becomes an area citrus grower owning five acres and managing 90 acres more for non-resident owners. His home is Rural Route No. 2 out of Harlingen.

This same year William A. Mitchell, who is to enter farming, comes to Harlingen from Dennison, TX. This First Methodist Church member dies at age 92 on 9/27/59 leaving son Mitchell and daughters Mrs. William Campbell and Mrs. J.C. Baker.

After checking out both California and Florida, Wimberly McLeod comes to Harlingen where he and financial partner, Walton D. Hood, a San Antonio banker, buy in 1928 a large but undeveloped tract of 1,870 acres with the intention of subdividing it into small acreages for citrus production. They create the McLeod-Hood Land Co. The site is located just south of the Ojo de Agua Tract, bounded on the east by the Arroyo Colorado and the west by the Briggs-Coleman Tract. It even has a 69 acre reservoir. The 165 lots range in size from around 2.8 acres to 20 acres. A large u-shaped two-story residence/clubhouse is erected on the property next to the arroyo to entertain prospective buyers. Wimberly McLeod is president of McLeod and Hood Co. with Paul H. Brown as vice-president, and Walton D. Hood, secretary-treasurer. The company's office is in the Politis Building at 108 ½ North 1st Street. McLeod will also sell parcels in the Rice Tract east of San Benito. This land is then cleared by the Bingley brothers of Los Fresnos. McLeod is a native of Abbeville, GA, having been born there 11/6/92. By 1931 he and his wife have a small daughter.

2/25 L.C. Head, wife and children arrive this month from Bienville, LA to soon erect a farm residence on the Wilson Tract.

3/30/25 Plans are to bond the Valley Mid-Winter Fair Association. Its directors propose the building of a large auditorium on the fair grounds. By November a 60' x 230' main exhibition hall is being built to accommodate 92 booths. As a fair attraction, 27 thoroughbred horses will be brought in for racing.

This year the irrigation district encompasses 43,000 acres, 23,000 of which are being cultivated.

6/5/25 Major flooding of the Rio Grande occurs. 400 to 500 men work to close the 35' gap in the river levee ½ mile above the Harlingen Canal intake. While an estimated 300 or so acres are inundated by the break, more extensive damage is not incurred thanks to the hard work of many volunteers. The river level gage reading at the pumping plant is at 62', its highest in history. Resacas running north have water levels making them brim full.

6/12/25 Prof. Arthur T. Potts resigns his Texas A&M position as head of the horticultural division to join Sam Baker in the formation of a nursery company called Baker-Potts. In addition to an A&M degree Potts possesses one in citrus from the University of California. Potts had help to set up Texas A & M College experiment stations around the state, including the Weslaco one in 1923. It was originally Substation

Number 15. In 1951 the Rio Grande Horticultural Society recognized his efforts and ever since the prestigious annual Arthur T. Potts Award is awarded to a deserving individual. Baker came to the Valley to be an ag inspector and in 1916 entered business in Los Fresnos. Baker-Potts Road west of Harlingen is named after the nursery site.

6/24/25 The greatest cotton crop yet in Valley history begins to be ginned. By October untimely rains have dampened the estimated yields. Still by the October completion, Harlingen's three gins handle 11, 569 bales, Rangerville, 2,280, Combes 2,120, and Adams Garden 1,600.

8/7/25 A group of Harlingen principles states plans to form the Valley Vineyard Co. with \$60,000 capital. Plans are to plant 60 acres of grapes grafted to Mustang rootstock as recommended by horticulturalist Stillwell.

9/18/25 The 12,500 acres of the H.H. Hardin Tract east of Briggs-Coleman is to be cleared according to Frank Hardin. O.D. Howard will be in charge.

11/25 A new gin is to be constructed at Palmetal by the People's Gin Co. Another is to go up north of Botts Produce on Commerce. Principles for the latter are C.L. Webb of Hugo, OK and T.A. Henderson of Harlingen. Botts Produce is this month to be succeeded by the Fruit Produce Exchange.

1926 This is the year Frank E. Davis becomes a Harlingen resident. He goes on to become a pioneer in the gift fruit shipping business as president of Pittman and Davis shippers. He will serve as president of the school board for 13 years, a president of the Rotary club, and be involved in other civic endeavors.

6/26 The C.C. Howell Company is dealing in fresh fruit and vegetables.

8/11/26 The city's only cotton compress facility burns down. The three acre building and 4,000 bales burned up were worth \$500,000 according to J.K. Cain, president of the Aransas Cotton Compress Co., and its superintendent R.M. Loving. On 1/14/27 plans are told to rebuild the compress for \$100,000.

8/17/26 Farmers and water districts plan a meeting to discuss the uncertainties associated with Mexico water withdrawals from the river. At the 8/27 meeting of Valley delegates in McAllen, an endorsement is made for a Rio Grande Reservoir.

9/3/26 J.E. Warner is one of the owners of Harlingen's new grist mill.

10/8/26 To-date Harlingen has ginned 12,780 bales for the season, largest of any Cameron County city. San Benito is next at 11,730 out of a total of 48,700 for the county.

11/2/26 Cameron County voters approve law to establish a closed-range county. Banned from running at-large are cows, mules, jacks, jennets, and horses.

In this year S. R. Jennings owns the land that will become the Valley Groves Subdivision, currently the Russell Lane and Nueces Park area.

It is this year that Walter F. Rees becomes superintendent of the Cameron County Irrigation District No. 1 pumping plant. He will continue in the position for 27 years until expiring in Rangerville at age 52 on 1/16/53. He is survived by his wife Edna and two daughters.

1927 Stanley Crockett begins work in citrus culture. By 1958 he would own 1,200 acres, half of which were in citrus production.

Produce broker John Morris, Jr. erects beautiful home on Taylor Street. His product label will read: Map-o-Tex Brand, Texas Vegetables packed and distributed by John Morris Jr. Co., Inc., Harlingen, Texas.

In this year a complicated law case is initiated involving 50,000 acres in the Ojo de Agua Tract north of Harlingen. It will drag on for over ten years. The number of litigants is 1,200, and testimony taken covers over 20,000 pages.

The annual rainfall for 1927 is 6 ½" below the average. River supplies are also low. As a result cotton production and ginning are less than half that produced in 1926.

1928 CCWD officers for the year are C.P. Bobo, director, president and manager; J.B. Elmore, vice-president; J.S. Blakney, vice-president; J.R. Grimes, vice-president; Hugh Fitzgerald, vice-president, Frank H. Brown, assessor and collector; and E.B. Worley, engineer. By the end of this year The CCWD No.1 comprises a total 43, 239.39 acres of which 38, 240.62 are irrigated, the balance of which is being used for canals, roads, drainage ditches, and land too high to irrigate. In this year 26,000 acres are under cultivation. These contain cotton, corn, cabbage, beets, carrots, other truck crops, and citrus. There is also dairy and forage. The district has about 160 miles of canals and laterals and a drainage system with 60 miles of ditches. At this time its pumping plant is housed in a substantial iron and concrete structure and consists of four 200hp Fairbanks, Morse and Co. internal combustion engines operating four 36" centrifugal pumps and one 42" one. The total pumping capacity is 132,000gpm. One of the district's canals runs along what is now 13th Street then turns west north of Jefferson Street with a branch going south to replenish City Lake.

L.E. Snavely is doing so well with his citrus business that in mid-1928 he constructs his \$11,250 showplace on Wilson Road. He was educated in Wellington High School in that city in Kansas and at Kansas Normal School. In 1899 he wed Lenna M. Edmondson of Wellington. In 1931 this First Presbyterian, Woodman of the World and Kiwanis member and his wife had two children. He is found dead in Haymarket Plaza, San Antonio. His death at age 68 in 1939 is likely due to a heart attack. Mrs. Snavely is to precede him in death in 1938. Their daughter is to become Mrs. Paul Phipps.

7/3/28 After a fire last year the People's Gin with W. L. McElwain as manager was all set to open with new equipment and an extra cleaner costing \$35,000.

8/21/28 The five gins operating in Harlingen—Wade-Newton-Elrod, Farmers Co-operative Gin Co., Valley Gin, People's Gin, and Farmers Gin—have processed 8,000 bales to-date and expect to gin 2000 more in an excellent season. Soon to go up here is the Valley Gin Mill with Joe Roberts as president. Rather than compete for labor to pick cotton most growers had agreed in July on a common wage. It is 75 cents per 100 lbs. for a first picking.

10/4/28 The United Growers Exchange of Harlingen completes a fruit packing shed at Stuart Place. It will be operated by Wallace, Shannon & Co.

11/28 Harper and Fitzgerald, packers and shippers of fruit along the rail line at Stuart Place, advertise gift fruit boxes for \$1.50 and up.

12/14/28 I. B. Corns of Stuart Place is named one of ten master farmers in the state. A native of Indiana and a Purdue University graduate he came to the Valley nine years ago and cleared his 40 acre parcel then maximized its productivity.



4/21/29 20,000 carloads of potatoes are forecast to be shipped from the area this season.  
11/29 *Texas Citriculture* notes that Lon Hill has been experimenting and propagating avocado and papayas for six years. In the 1/27/31 News-Herald of Franklin, Pennsylvania Jim Borland who visited here reported in his column that Hill had 2,500 avocado trees of about 5' height planted next to the auditorium. Elsewhere, he had another 2,500 trees about 20' in height. The *Texas Citriculture* Magazine was first offered for sale 7/28/29 at \$1 per year subscription.

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

1920s The U.S. Post Office occupies part of the ground floor of the Lozano Building. One observer notes that Harlingen "has a spirit of doing things which is sure to accomplish results." Most residents paid for sidewalk paving in front of their houses.  
1920 Jim Wells loses control of the politics of Cameron County forever. Oscar C. Dancy is elected to the Cameron County Commissioners Court. He will serve as county judge for 50 years.

When he is about 23 years old L. Mackey Chaudoin comes to Harlingen, where family members already reside, from Gonzales. Later he enters the law enforcement field. On 8/10/35 tragedy is to befall him. After pursuing a stolen vehicle, he is shot by George Dunlap, one of its occupants. While Dunlap is killed in an exchange of gunfire, Mackey is seriously wounded and will die 2/19/36 in Dallas where he has been taken for treatment. The well-liked forty-nine year old Mackey will leave behind a wife, May, and four children.

Indicative of the city's growth and the need for additional revenues is the re-evaluation of property. In a year's time the Methodist Church building went from a valuation of \$4,500 to \$10,000 and its parsonage from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

1920-22 The Volunteer fire department strength is increased to 24.

1921 Indicative of growth is an ordinance governing parking on Jackson Avenue and the establishment of an 18 mph speed limit in the business district. After all two blocks of Jackson Avenue had been paved in 1920.

1/1/21 E.W. Anglin is named deputy sheriff by Sheriff W. Frank Brown. Who assumed office today taking the place of Pinkie Vann who was filling the unexpired term of husband W.T. Vann who died after his election in November.

Postal receipts jumped \$5,000 to \$16,000 for 1928.

This month the City takes over the electric and water utilities and systems.

1/11/21 A \$40,000 bond issue for street improvements passes along with another of \$60,000 of Sewer Bonds. Both passed on a vote of 64 for and 10 against. Forty-four light posts had been erected and lights were on all night.

4/21 E.C. Bennett arrives. He will become Manager of the Water and Light District operated by the city. Born in Farmersburg, IN 9/29/90, he attends public schools. Married to Jennie Reed on 5/18/11, this First Methodist member is also a Mason and Shriner.

5/1/21 W.Z. Weems is now a Cameron County Commissioner representing the area around Harlingen. He will serve several terms.

7/19/21 Harlingen 'white way' to be completed next week. Electric lights on ornamental poles will line Main (Jackson) Street.

7/26/21 Citizens vote on bond issue of \$120,000-- \$40,000 for streets, \$48,000 for sewers, and \$32,000 for electric improvement.

11/2/21 Four additional city blocks are to be paved in order to connect to the newly completed concrete highway (part of F Street) from Harlingen to San Benito. This road goes all the way to Brownsville and is the first hard surfaced road in the Valley. Road man E. W. Anglin boosts to the *Harlingen Star* that the city has 18 miles of graded streets, some even paved. The graded streets include 35 blocks west of the railroad tracks. Plans are in the works to beautify Travis Park.

3/6/22 The city's first fire truck is unloaded.

3/17/22 With a bid of \$2,772 A.A. Robinson and J. H. Erwin are awarded the re-flooring work for the Arroyo Colorado Bridge, part of State Highway Number 12.

4/7/22 Joe Roberts is elected mayor with a record 399 votes being cast.

5/20/22 John Francis (J.F.) Rodgers assumes the position of Harlingen postmaster. He serves until 1934. This St. Anthony Catholic Church member is one time president of the Chamber of Commerce, helps to organize the Valley Farm Bureau and participates in the development of the Intracoastal Canal. He dies 1/1/61 at age 90. Here he leaves his wife Mary, and sons Raymond J. and James N. Rodgers.

7/22/22 City officials offer vote of thanks to levee flood fighters with A. Tamm, engineer in charge of the Harlingen water district; H.A. Beckwith, water engineer; and C.P. Bobo, manager of the district. The Rio Grande floodwaters peaked on June 25, 1922 as the Mexico side levees broke through. Alfred Tamm is a civil engineer, who also operates a consulting, drafting and mapping business out of the Irrigation District office at 209 ½ W. Jackson. His later offices are at 107 S. 1<sup>st</sup> and 216 E. Van Buren. He is by 1930 also the city engineer, a position that he holds until December 1948. Over the years Tamm is responsible for laying out numerous subdivisions including that of Adams Gardens in which its eastside boundary is named Tamm Lane for him. For many years Tamm and his wife Daisy together with daughters Alice and Marion Anna live at 205 E. Tyler, a site now the City Hall parking lot.

3/6/22 E.C. Bennett, in charge of all city equipment, unloads first solid wheel fire engine, a 350 gpm American-La France Type 40 pumper. Fund raisers have helped to defray its cost. Bennett is city manager of utilities, 1921-1929. He authorizes the street name changes for the south-north cross streets but these are not implemented until 1926. Those east of the intersection of Harrison and Commerce get numbers and those west, letters. The cross streets west are given consecutive alphabet letters starting with A at Commerce and to the east, consecutive numbers. Street names which were lost, starting with Mexico Street becoming F Street, and moving east were: Matamoras, Hidalgo, Winchell, Bell, Hill, Fordyce (later 1st Street and also called in part New Combes Road), Brooking (sic), Van Arsdale, Beggs, Vanderbilt, Bennett, Whitaker (7th Street), Grace (8th), Bryan (9th), and Regan (10th). The south part of part of 9th was also named Harper for a time and south 10th Marie. As the city expanded west, Perry (Eye) and Cook (G) were added. The correct numbering of houses is also accomplished. These changes occur in late 1925 or early 1926.

1922-23 The city has 200 telephones, 227 light connections, 4.05 miles of curbs and gutters, 2.61 miles of paved streets, and the post office has \$9,600 in receipts.

1923 The city has an assessed valuation of \$1,852,000, one mile of water mains, and 7.01 miles of sanitary sewers in its initial year with a system.

This year a mutual aid agreement is signed for adjacent cities to render aid in case of a major fire.

4/6/23 The city advertises for bids to dig a drainage ditch along the west side of the railroad tracks with laterals extending along the main streets of Mexiquito.

The paving of Harrison Blvd. with asphalt will now be completed. In 1922 gravel was laid on the street and given time to settle.

When the city election results are printed in the newspaper, 243 votes were cast to fill the top three positions on the city council. Sam Botts was the leading vote getter with 216, followed by R. B. Hamilton 135 and J. W. Rhone 127. Failing to obtain seats were E. W. Anglin 122 and M. I Olsen 116. Unopposed for city attorney was A.J. Rabel who received 236 votes.

6/3/23 Eighteen or more musicians organize into the Harlingen Municipal Band. They present weekly concerts at a bandstand located at what is now Heritage Manor. H.H. Schanders is band director and A. Goldammer, son of the builder, is a trumpet player.

1924 A nine foot wide concrete road from Harlingen to Combes is completed. This is the New Combes Highway made pretty much obsolete when Business 77 comes through. The cost of this improvement has come from a county bond issue of \$350,000 passed in 1922 and to be used to complete the Brownsville to San Benito paving and then west to the Hidalgo County line.

6/30/24 City revenues for the year ending this date are \$31,751. This is primarily from taxes, penalties, and interest totaling \$29,291. Expenses are \$30,733, mostly the \$21,437 in borrowing interest costs. The mayor and commissioners receive \$5 a month while the city engineer gets \$7.50 a day and is required to furnish his own help. The city secretary receives \$30 a month.

7/9/24 By a vote of 110 against and 75 for, voters reject the proposal to sell the city owned electric plant for \$106,000.

1924-26 Under Mayor Joe E. Roberts the city allocates funds for parks, establishes a County health unit, builds a dog pound, and installs street signs. In 1925 bonds are voted to build a city hall, a fire station, and a jail. The solid two story jail building with its barred windows still exists on the railroad side of 523 North Commerce between Adams and Washington Streets.

1/8/25 The municipally-owned electric and water plant has made a \$20,000 profit in 1924 according to City Treasurer W.F. McLeod. During the year 110 new electric hookups have been made and 91 new water ones. Commissioner Holmes, who is charge of street maintenance, notes later in the month that town drainage will be improved with more ditches to the arroyo. At the same time a bond refinancing issue is revealed.

2/2/25 A special census taken for the purpose shows the city with just under 5,400 people. This indicates a 100% gain in four years. Harlingen therefore becomes eligible for "home rule" and formulates a new city charter. It is adopted 2/24/27, replaced again in 1947, and once more in 1956. Harlingen boasts that its tax rate set at \$1.50 is lower than most Valley cities set at \$2 to 2.50. The school tax is 75 cents.

2/13/25 The contract for \$57,435 is awarded to Dodds and Wedegartner of San Benito for a new Arroyo Colorado vehicle bridge. It is to be built to the east of the 1911 one now deemed unsafe. The new structure will have two 150' spans on concrete piers and an overall length of 350'. Judge Dancy is to later explain that 2/3 of the costs will come from the state and the remainder from the county.

2/27/25 Six blocks of North Fordyce Street are paved in concrete running from the South Texas Lumber Co. to the properties of John Myrick and Charles F. Perry.

5/1 Acting Mayor Smith Thompson, upon recommendations made by City Engineer A. Tamm, says the city needs a \$100,000 bond issue in order to install five miles more of sewer lines, resurface streets in the business section, put in a modern water filtration plant, and pave 2 more blocks of the city. A month and a half later the requirement will have jumped to \$220,000. On 5/19 the bond issue passes 151 to 16. \$14,000 is earmarked for the new two-storied city hall/fire department and \$6,000 for parks improvements. In September the city purchases a 50' by 120' lot on Hill and Monroe for \$1000. This was to be the site of city hall to be designed by Elwing and Mulhausen but a Van Buren Street site is later selected. In October F.P. McElwaith is awarded the contract to pave 90 city blocks with rock asphalt at \$1.30 per square yard.

8/21/25 Cameron County voters, with Harlingen voters leading the way with the highest percentage "yes" votes, approve \$1 ½ million flood control bonds.

1925 Dr. J.C. Watkins arrives with his wife Daisy. He is to become Harlingen's first Public Health Officer and retain that position for 20 years. He had been married in 1904 in Huntsville, AL. This First Christian Church member worked in Oklahoma 1918-24 before coming here.

By mid-year the city has tax revenue valuations totaling \$2,110,000, an electric/water division worth \$125,000, bank deposits of \$1 million, and 50 miles of paved roads.

7/4/25 It is announced that free U.S. Postal mail delivery is to commence 10/1 after the city puts up street signs and numbers houses.

1925 Mrs. C.A. Macy becomes the first salaried librarian. The library is in the rear of Robert's Jewelry Store. She is followed by Mrs. Margaret Rork, Mrs. Gerald (Verna) Jackson McKenna, Mrs. William Clark, and Mrs. Lucille Cocke through the year 1946.

1926 R.H. (Bob) Johnson (8/30/80-10/26/46) is appointed Harlingen's first police chief. This former Texas Ranger has served since 1920 as city marshal. He will continue in this position until E.W. Anglin takes the job in 1931. Upon his death in 1946 he is survived by his wife Sarah (Betty) Elizabeth (9/10/81-7/5/61). Both are interred in the Harlingen Cemetery.

This year the Combes community is incorporated.

1926 The Chamber of Commerce building at the intersection of Monroe and Commerce is dismantled. *The Valley Evening Globe* of 9/2/26 Vol. 1 No. 22 says that the frame shack which also served as city hall is to be taken down and sold by the city street department. The site is soon cleaned, planted, and dedicated as a small park to honor

Gordon Hill. Gordon, who had died of influenza in 1918, was a promoter of the city, served it in several capacities, and pushed for park development.

The city sets up a paid Fire Department and a second pumper is purchased. The new City Hall and Fire Department building is completed at 202-204 E. Van Buren Street. It is on 7/30/26 that the city offices move into the new city hall.

Under Chief Bert Gamble (first tenure 1917 to 12/3/26; second tenure late 1934 until 1/36) fire equipment drivers go on 24 hour shifts and are compensated. The Fire Department plays host to the State Firemen and Fire Marshals' convention. Gamble commenced his Harlingen residency in 1917, reorganized the volunteer fire department, and was elected chief that year. He had served with fire departments in Itasca in 1903, Denton, 1905, Teague 1907 where he was chief 1909 until 1917. He will become seriously ill, relinquish his position, and die at age 52 in the early 1940s. This lumber and hardware man who was a Mason and member of the Baptist Church will leave behind his wife and two sons.

In this year and for the next two the city moves forward with street paving and the installation of sidewalks and curbs. Lot owners are assessed most of the costs for these activities. Major lot owners are Osco Morris, J.M. Green, A.E. and A.L. Benoist, A.L. Brooks and the Harlingen Development Co. The latter had been incorporated for \$100,000 and its existence was predicated on expeditiously selling numerous townsite lots that had languished under the control of an absentee entity. Albert Benoist is to commence a subdivision and owns the apartments at 1-2 W. Harrison. By 1930 with his hand in numerous interests Brooks will be listed as a sales counselor for the McLeod-Hood Company.

It is also in this year that a new two-lane but still narrow bridge across the Arroyo Colorado at F Street is completed to replace the outdated one-lane 1911 bridge. The new bridge is constructed by Dodds and Wedegartner, Inc. of San Benito. Its cost is \$67,316.09. It opens for traffic on 3/9/26.

5/20/26 S. Finley Ewing, R.B. Hamilton, and E.W. Patterson are appointed as a Board of Equalization until they accomplish the task. Ewing is also Mayor, having entered office 4/6/26 and serves to 12/11/28.

8/6/26 By this date A.D. Holmes, street commissioner, boasts of 21 miles of paved road, 18 miles of sanitary sewer, and six miles of storm drains. Two months later he notes that Bowie Park with a children's playground will have a zoo put in it.

8/23/26 The new \$35,000 water filtration plant opens. It can handle up to 500,000 gallons in a 24 hour period.

9/1/26 \$49,800 is expended by the city for a 720 hp Fairbanks, Morse and Company generator to double the electric power output by the city's electric plant.

9/3/26 Postmaster J.F. Rodgers requests a new larger post office. Current one has 640 boxes and demand is high for more.

9/8/26 City votes on and approves a \$250,000 bond issue.

11/4/26 The city population is given as 7,000 plus 3,000 more within two miles of its boundaries.

12/16/26 The city buys a 60 acre tract from the Valley Fair Association for \$80,000. This is the site for the annual Valley Mid-Winter Fair and will continue to be used in part for this enterprise. At the time it is adjacent to the city limits.

1/1/27 E.C. Bennett succeeds Bert Gamble as elected fire chief and serves until late 1934. He will serve again from 1/36 until 8/36. William Winters is assistant fire chief and maintains the equipment.

1/21/27 The city draws plans to beautify Diaz Park by installing an ornamental pool surrounded by flowers and crossed by a bridge.

2/23/27 By votes cast of 88 to 3 a new city charter is adopted in an election, for upon reaching a population of 5,000 or more the city qualified for a commission form of city government. Ewing is re-elected under the new system. A.D. Holmes is commissioner for parks and zoo, J.H. Green for police and fire, Sam Potts for streets and alleys, W.M. Hundley for lights and water, and R. B. Hamilton for taxation and finance. The charter is replaced in 1947 and again in 1956. The population of the city has grown to 13,000.

1927 The Harlingen Municipal Auditorium, 1114 Fair Park Blvd., is being erected at a cost of \$125,000. It is completed before mid-1928 and seats 3,000. The Hurricane of 1933 causes extensive damage to the auditorium, so it is extensively renovated. A new cornerstone is placed at it dated 1936. The city government people who approved the expenditures were: Mayor Sam Botts; commissioners J.J. Burk, George Waters, Neil Madeley, Dr. E.A. Davis, and H.C. Ware. The architect was Stanley Bliss with the Ramsey Brothers doing the contracting. It is of art deco design and has a state of the art stage. Reconfigured, it then seats over 2,200.

In this year a new two-lane bridge is erected across the Arroyo Colorado at F Street to replace the old one lane one. It has a central concrete pier in the middle of the arroyo.

3/15/27 A \$12,000 high bridge over the Arroyo Colorado to connect to Rio Hondo is being constructed.

3/22/27 A \$400,000 bond issue is announced. On 4/27/27 it passes. Funds will be used to enlarge the city hall and jail, pave streets, improve water systems, and pay for the \$100,000 (eventually \$125,000) municipal auditorium.

4/5/27 McLellan's, the national chain five and dime store, has its grand opening.

8/24/27 The "Harlingen Convention" is held in the Harlingen High School auditorium. It is a state-wide political meeting called to discuss organizing Hispanics against racial discrimination. Felipe Herrera of Harlingen acts as secretary. M. Flores Villar, a citizen of Mexico, is a writer for "El Comercio", the Harlingen newspaper. Ninety percent of the participants walk out when those of Mexican citizenry were to be excluded from the organization. The convention initiative, however, grows into the League of Latin American Citizens and later, with others in 1929, merges into the newly created League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC.)

11/4/27 Sixteen of the city's leading citizens take a full page ad in the Harlingen Star. They urge the city's sale of its water and light utility to CP&L for \$1.25 million. On the books it is valued at \$654,799.09. Revenues from its sale would reduce the city's public debt from \$1,486,718 to \$236,718.

11/11/27 With 768 votes cast, the sale of the city's electric plant to CP&L for \$1.25 million is rejected by a margin of 180 votes.

12/2/27 The paving of the road between Harlingen and Rio Hondo is completed. The road paving from San Benito to Rio Hondo was also recently completed. This allows for a scenic circle drive on paved roads of about 24 miles.

12/23/27 Postal receipts total \$40,000 thereby allowing a 1st Class designation for Harlingen.

1928 There are 21.79 of paved roads in the city including a 30' strip of concrete down Harrison Avenue. It was laid by the Frank McElwrath and Tyree Bell Company of Corsicana. This year a 12" cast iron water main is installed downtown. In February of 1963, 2000" of this main running along 2nd Street from Jefferson to Harrison has to be replaced.

9/25/28 J.B. Chambers, chairman of the Arroyo Navigation District, makes formal application for a cut in South Padre Island to facilitate movement into the Arroyo Colorado waterway to be. Nine months later he and the old board are re-elected by a 3 to 1 margin after opponents question the investment of funds.

10/30/28 The City holds an election to approve or reject the sale of the electric and water utilities systems to the Central Power and Light Company for \$1,580,000 which represents the City's indebtedness on the plant. The sale is approved with the highest voter turnout ever at 1,143 giving 683 yes and 460 no votes.

12/28 Sam Botts is elected mayor. He serves from 12/11/28 to 12/8/36.

1929 The Harlingen Municipal Golf Course of 168 acres is being built to the design of John Bredemus, famous golf course architect and secretary of the Texas Professional Golfers Association. The idea for the establishment of a course came from an organized group of golfers called the Arroyo Country Club. One of the employed workmen is Henry Partida who will stay on after the course is completed. He and his family will live in a house constructed for them close to the 18th tee. In 1990 this building was removed. Henry will remain a 38-year lifetime employee of the course, always maintaining it in tiptop shape.

By this year a concrete swimming pool has been constructed in the very middle of Bowie Park and next to it a pavilion. In the northwest corner of the park the Boy Scouts, who were organized here in 1927, have erected a meeting hall. The Woman's Club built in 1927 has taken a portion of the park's southwest corner.

A fire fighting sub-station is opened at 210 South F Street. The building at 201 South F Street that will one day house the Family Emergency Center is erected. The main station of a two story brick building is now in Block 71, 202 E. Van Buren. It has an electric siren atop its roof. The fire department has three paid men and 25 unpaid volunteers that includes one chief and two assistant chiefs. The equipment now includes one American La France 750 gallon pumper with 1,400' of 2 ½" hose and a 36' ladder, another American La France pumper with 350 gallon capacity, 1,200' of hose and a 36' ladder, and a Buick chemical truck with various chemical tanks. An additional 1,700' of 2 ½' hose is kept in reserve.

1/21/29 HWY 96 currently paved for three miles north of Harlingen is to be paved all the way to the Willacy County line.

7/4/29 Dodds and Wedegartner finish paving the Altas Palmas stretch on Stuart Place while McElwrath completes the Palmetal Road one.

11/29 Harlingen boosts that its airport was the first in the Valley to be rated by the Department of Commerce. In May after a committee was appointed to find a new 400 acre site for a city airport, it begins to draw up plans to enlarge and modernize the existing facility and equipment. Mid-year efforts to entice Pan American Airlines here

from Brownsville had fallen on deaf ears despite occasional flooding of the Brownsville strip.

1929-1941 America's Great Depression descends upon the country and persists as first President Herbert Hoover and then Franklin Roosevelt make serious miscalculations regarding an economic cure.

### **Business/Commercial/Industry**

1/7/20 V.P DuBose of Devine and T.C. Claypool purchase the *Harlingen Star* from T.G. Locke, who has been ill for some months. The former are experienced newsmen.

1/17/20 F.Z. Bishop is publicized by the *Brownsville Herald* for plans to build a three story \$25,000 hotel.

9/10/20 Often noted to be Harlingen's first movie theater, the Rialto, in actuality, was not. Some time between 1910 and 1915 a Mr. Denton operated the Rex Theater. E. O. Austin was its projectionist. Even before that the Dreamland Theater operated on Monroe Avenue near the corner of A Street. Built at the southwest corner of 1st and Jackson Street, the Rialto opens in 1921 with W.T. Davis as proprietor. The admission is 10 cents for children and 25 cents for adults. Louvered doors on the 1st Street side provide early ventilation and cooling. The circular window in the upper front of the building gives the projectionist some respite from the heat. Besides the films of the day, stage and talent shows are hosted. Non-denominational Sunday School classes for men are also held in the theater in the 20s and 30s. Davis leased the Rialto to Howard Allen early on. In January 1925, it is F.F. Vincent who is to sell it to Jack Pickens and W.H. Hall of Dallas. They immediately make plans to renovate it. By mid-May Pickens buys out Hall's share. Pickens is to become vice-president of Valley Theaters, Inc. Born in Waxahachie 9/1/98, he was educated in Gilmer, TX. He served 18 months in the army during WWI. He married Claudia Lewis on 1/3/23. This Methodist was a Mason, Rotarian, Elk, and a Chamber of Commerce member.

In the silent movie days various pianists were hired to provide suitable background music. One such individual was Mrs. Earle Rumbo.

One block west, the Star Theater operated for a short time. Lawson Anglin remembered a film at the Star in 1918 about the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma. For publicity the ranch sent a representative along with a "\$100,000 jeweled saddle." Anglin lent him a horse to ride up and down the Harlingen streets "ballyhooing" the film with a megaphone. The PBS program "Antiques Roadshow" of 2/16/04 while visiting Oklahoma City also visited a saddle museum there and showed this very saddle. The theater closed shortly after Lawson's effort.

1920 In this year it is likely that the city saw its first drive-in service station, "Battery and Oil Station" operated by William Witt. He is the son-in-law of G.P. Brandt, who operated a blacksmith shop at the location, 202 N. Commerce, for several years. In 1922 I.W. Spenser bought the property and building behind it. By 1926 A.T. Starnes becomes the manager of the Harlingen Battery and Oil Station. A Sinclair station is constructed by Mr. Teas at 202 N. Commerce, then HWY 96 which is the main route from Corpus Christi to Brownsville. It ceases operations in the 1970s and has since been restored in appearance by owner Bill DeBrooke.



In this year Fulton Jones comes to town. His first enterprise is ice delivery. Two years later he starts the Fulton Jones Transfer and Storage Co. when he purchases a truck with solid rubber wheels. By 1924 he is occupying a warehouse on N. Commerce near J.W. Rhone's seed store (later to be Jackson Feed). A Texas Almanac of 1972-73 reveals this: "The **motor truck industry**, now a major enterprise, began in the 1920s as a series of small, local operators, much as bus lines did. But in 1929 the State of Texas started issuing permits to truck lines through the Motor Transportation Division of the Railroad Commission. The first permit was issued to Jones Transfer and Storage, Harlingen. Its route was Mission to Harlingen via Pharr and Mercedes; Mission to Harlingen via Pharr, Edinburg, La Villa, and Mercedes; Raymondville to Brownsville via Harlingen." By 1930 Jones is at a larger facility in the 1000 block of West Harrison. His moving business becomes Valley-wide, and around 1929 he uses the names Jones Moving and Storage Co. when he incorporates. Back then the terms of duration of incorporation were only one year and had to be renewed annually until 1938 when the term became 'in perpetuity'. He affiliated with Mayflower Transit in 1934 while his brother George Jones split off and founded Fidelity Bonded Warehouse in McAllen – an affiliate of Allied Van Lines – around that same time. Glenn Key became president of Jones Moving upon Fulton's death. Fulton's wife Oattie (McAllen), and branch managers Brack Lipscomb (McAllen) and James Reed (Brownsville) all owned an interest in the corporation. Key retired in 1981 and arranged the sale of the company to a single owner - Bailey D Reynolds of Rio Hondo. Shortly after the sale (1983?), the company moved from the 1002 West Jackson into a newly built (co-owned by Reynolds) warehouse at Hanmore Industrial Parkway. By 1988, the company had consolidated its McAllen and Brownsville offices into the Harlingen location and in the early 1990's the firm moved its operation to the present location at 2404 Wilson Road – a former fruit and vegetable warehouse built in the 1950's. Mark H. Groves purchased the company around 1994. Living at 320 Pecan, McAllen in his later years, Fulton dies at age 65 on 12/16/62 leaving his wife Oattie and brother George of McAllen. This Church of Christ member left no children.

In 1920 Ramon Castro becomes a resident of the city. This Knights of Columbus member will become proprietor of the Harlingen Furniture Co. He dies at age 72 on 7/4/60.

The Valley Baking Co, predecessor to the Rainbo Bakery, is to open in Harlingen this year. After being at 1025 W. Harrison, by 1937 it will open in a new plant at 1600 W. Harrison.

Coming to the Valley in 1920 was C.A. Macy who would become a hardware agent in Harlingen for the Corpus Christi Hardware Co. Born in Phillipsburg, OH 4/28/72, he claimed Mayflower ancestors and was educated at Southwest Kansas College. He married Harriet Scott of Hutchinson, KS in 11/98. This Presbyterian Church member was also a Mason. Their sons were Ken S. Macy, an architect, and W. Scott Macy who was with the Weslaco C of C. Mrs. Macy will be Harlingen's librarian.

11/30/20 The Goodie Garden, two doors west of the Dreamland Theater on Monroe Avenue, is selling fresh produce such as grapes, apples, bananas, peaches, and plums. Wood, Lewis and Wood is advertising its dresses, stylish stout coat suits and coats while Wyatt's Self Service Grocery emphasizes its low prices.

Principles at the Harlingen State Bank are: A.L. Brooks, president; H.H. Burchard, vice-president; R.B. Hamilton, cashier; and E. O. Anglin, assistant cashier.

1921 Charles F.C. Ladd comes to the Valley to work for A. J. McColl as general land agent. In the San Antonio area he had been colonization agent for the Winter Garden Farms, Inc. He sells much McAllen and mid-Valley property. In 1931 he is connected with Adams Gardens, Inc., the outfit which is to subdivide the former Turner Tract. His Harlingen firm, of which he is president, is called the Ladd Farm Mortgage Co. For a time Lon C. Hill, Jr. works for Ladd. Ladd also utilizes V. Stambaugh, a Florida horticulturalist, to experiment with semi-tropical trees in order to find something suitable for economic development in the area. Ladd was born 8/28/83 in Miles City, Montana. He was educated at Hutchinson, KS and Kansas City, MO. This Mason married Regna D. Welch of Kansas City on 2/28/18. By 1931 they have a son, Charles, Jr.

1921 Edwin R. Templeton builds two story cream-colored brick over 5,400 square foot building at Monroe and B Streets. It houses his grocery store and Packer's Furniture Store. The Woodmen of the World fraternal organization and other organizations such as Masons, DeMolay, Rainbow Girls, etc hold their meetings upstairs. In 1985 it retains a shoe repair shop, beer and pool hall, and union meetings are conducted upstairs. The Grimsell Seed Co. will eventually purchase the property and commence its restoration.

1921 A Harlingen Chamber of Commerce brochure boasts of one business college, one weekly newspaper, one wholesale grocer, one soft drink bottler, one wholesale/retail seed store, three wholesale produce buyers, three wholesale oil companies, three hardware stores, eight dry good and clothing stores, nine grocery stores, three meat markets, three wholesale bakeries, three cafes, three hotels, seven garages, two drug stores, two gins, one variety store, one jeweler, one watchmaker, one ice factory, one electric supply store, one machine shop, one plumbing and sheet metal works, one shoe repair, one electric company, one movie house, five real estate brokerages, six building contractors, five lawyers, two civil engineers, one certified architect, five medical doctors, two dentists, five insurance agencies, and one electrical engineer. Bank deposits total nearly one half million dollars.

1/21 The Chamber of Commerce erects an office building and offer its use for free for an entire year to the Rio Grande Growers Exchange, "hoping this to be of material service to the farmers."

3/3/21 The Harlingen State Bank closes its doors. Its liabilities were in excess of its assets. Depositors will not suffer as it is a State Guaranty bank. Word has it that it will be merged into the Planters State Bank.

6/8/21 The Texas Press Association has 250 members meeting in town for its 42<sup>nd</sup> annual convention. Gov. Pat Neff leads parade from the train depot. The Chamber of Commerce fetes the group.

7/26/21 City is soon to have an ice cream plant.

7/27/21 DuBose sells *Harlingen Star* to F.M. Allen of Austin. On 11/2/21 G.K. Shearer is named to be its editor. The paper soon upgrades to a linotype machine that provides fresh type for each issue and a uniform style. A subscription to the weekly is still only \$2 per year.

11/26/21 Tyre H. Brown joins the Planters State Bank as cashier. By December 1921 the bank has moved its location into the old Harlingen State Bank building. The bank is

reorganized as the Valley State Bank on 4/10/24, and Mr. Brown is made active vice-president. By 1927 he is president, a position which he will serve at least three terms, of the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce. Brown is a native of Luling, TX, having been born there 12/15/79. His community service includes promoting Boy Scouting and the Kiwanis Club. He is a member of the First Christian Church. In 1926 the bank has J. Lomax as its president, B. M. Holland and Tyre Brown as vp, H. M. Barton as cashier E.O. Anglin and Evie Chaudoin as asst. cashiers, T.C. Jeffry and Roe Davenport as bookkeepers, and Miss Louise Naumen as stenographer. The Valley State Bank in 1929 has John T. Lomax as president, Byron M. Holland, active vice-president, E.O. Anglin, cashier and Evie Chaudoin as assistant cashier. Its deposits approach \$1 million. Sometime after the above date, George Stout, a contractor who came with his wife to Harlingen in 1921, is to buy and own the *Star* until July 1925. Stout, a Presbyterian was to marry Anna M. born in Indianapolis on 4/12/61. They married 9/19/91 and she is to die on 11/20/25. The paper is published every Friday by the Harlingen Star Publishing Company.

1922 The E.O. Matz Electric Company commences business first as the Barth and Matz Electric Co. Lawrence Electric opens this same year. Ernest C. Barth works out of 217 E. Harrison. Other new businesses that first saw the light of day this year in Harlingen include: L.R. Hollingsworth Motor Co., Valley Packing Co., Valley Produce and Cold Storage Co., Aransas Compress with its \$75,000 facility under construction, Direct Mattress Co., Harlingen Creamery Co., Harlingen Radio, W.A. Tippett Orchardists' Supplies, First National Bank, the Valley Baptist Hospital, R. B. Roberts Jeweler, A. S. Wittenbach Groceries, Wes Bailey Tire & Rubber Co. (wholesale), and Smith Bros with gentlemen's furnishings.

Here this year via Oklahoma, Tennessee native Gypsy M. Bryan settles in Harlingen with her farmer husband, two children and her farming in-laws. She opens a portrait photography studio advertising "Someone Somewhere Wants Your Photo. We Make the Best."

2/22/22 The Security Bank of Harlingen is chartered, but by 4/17/22 changes its name to the National Bank of Harlingen. It opens March 1, 1922 at 117 West Jackson in the west half 12 ½ foot space of the Neil Madeley Grocery store. In 1923 Madeley will move and the bank purchases the entire space, which will later house the Delta Office Supply. On 7/1/22 it has \$44,468 in deposits. Its first president and majority stockholder is farmer turned oilman, A.B. Haufman from Kansas. H.M. Barton, a banker from Oakwood, TX, raised the \$25,000 capital and is cashier and vice president. Congressman John Nance Garner is a stockholder. The banks assets grow from \$163,157 in 1922 to \$4,394,300 two decades later, \$26,642,200 by 1962, \$176,111,000 by 1982 and \$222,984,769 in 1985. In 1937 it has more than \$1 million in deposits when it moves to 124 W. Jackson. In 1932 its president, B.F. Johnson dies as the Great Depression hits the Valley full force. W.H. Hall of Oklahoma City acquires control. Listed as investors with him are R.L. Hill, Roy Porter, H.E. Butt, and Dr. E.A. Davis. Hall will serve as president until his death in 1945. He is succeeded by Elam Clay Breedlove who had come to serve as vice president in 1937. On 3/26/51 the bank opens at 202 E. Van Buren, a site once having the city hall. Here a two-story building was erected. By 1959 its deposits are more than 30 million, and in 1972 on its 50th anniversary its deposits total \$60 million. In 4/82 it changes its name

to InterFirst Bank Harlingen. With consolidation of nation-wide banks it becomes Nations Bank and then is absorbed by Bank of America which currently occupies the seven story building at 222 E. Van Buren.

A competitor is the First National Bank with Lloyd H. Thompson as president, J.R. Roberts vice president, L.L. Barnett, cashier and Elmo Gallagher, asst. cashier. By mid-September of 1922 this bank has deposits of \$85,688.55. A year later these will have more than doubled to \$195,523.39, and by October 1924 "The Bank of Service" advertises deposits of \$483,179.54.

6/22 Roy Bertrum (R.B.) Roberts founds Roberts Jewelry in a store located in the Lozano Building. He promotes himself as "Optometrist and Watchmaker" but does have sales brochures from which customers may order jewelry. By 1925 he is active in the Kiwanis Club, the first of its kind in the Valley. After World War II R.B.'s son, Bert Lund Roberts, entered the business performing watch repairs. The business later became his. He was very active in numerous civic organizations. On 9/1/61 the business moved to 119 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and on 4/1/78 to its present location at 216 E. Jackson. On 11/9/07 with 85 years behind it, the firm received the Texas Treasure Business Award issued by the Texas Historical Commission.

In 1922 B. Frank Hardin, a son of Ben and Sarah Hardin, is a native of Wills Point, Van Zandt County, TX. He comes to town to be manager of the South Texas Lumber Company branch here. He volunteers for the military in World War I and out of a total of 20 months serves 15 ½ months in France as part of the 169th Aero Squadron. On 6/15/20 he marries Sarah Murray of Coleman, TX and has two daughters, Harriet and Mary Frances. This Methodist is also a Mason.

Sam Foster starts the first Chevrolet agency at 516 W. Jackson. In July 1, 1934 he sells his business to the Knapp Chevrolet Co. Shortly thereafter its W. Harrison building burns to the ground. The dealership moves to the Wroten Building where Harlingen Motors later was located. George Wroten, in addition to operating Wroten Motors, together with Phil Edie, operated the Cadillac Grill. In 1944, after he had left the dealership behind, he was employed by Browns Express Co. as a claims adjuster. He left the Valley in the fall of 1955. He died in San Antonio at age 81 on 2/8/61.

As the population grows, so does the number of insurance agents. One of these is Orville R. Eby, agent for the Peoria Life Insurance Co. Born in New Albany, KS 8/27/94, he was educated at the Fedonia Kansas Business School. He is a Methodist and a Lion. His father George lives in McAllen.

9/8/22 The Rio Grande Ice Company has started work on its new 4,000 ton ice storage vault adjoining its present one with 7,000 ton capacity. The new structure will be of brick and reinforced concrete and cost \$25,000. A. F. Engle is plant manager.

1923 H.J. Goetzke arrives this year. He is to become a realtor with C.D. Hanson and Co. Born in Bloomington, IL 10/31/79 to German immigrants who arrived in this country in 1963, he married Julia Dietrich 10/17/01. He serves on the school board at least three years, is a Mason and a Kiwanis member.

This year the Wittenbachs, father, C.H. and son A.J.(Adolph John, the grocer), construct a three story building on A Street south of the Lozano Building. When a hamburger joint on a lot to the south burns down, the following year they construct the large 5-story Wittenbach Building at 119 South A Street. It is Harlingen's first high rise and later will

have the city's first elevator. After several years it will take on the name the Embee Building when purchased by R.N. Jones and the Embee Corporation. In 1930 the building would house among others. Key Confectionery in its lobby, Lee Printing and Rubber Stamp, Real Silk Hosiery Mills, Inc., the American Legion Office, the office of contractor Andrew Goldammer, the National Collection Agency, Burroughs Adding Machine, American National Insurance Company and the office of Dr. Georgia A. Howell, a chiropractor. In the following years numerous doctors and lawyers would work in the building. The Embee Pharmacy later with its pharmacist, Kenneth MacPherson, was in the building. The Harlingen Business College was occupying the third floor of the addition by 1937 and later this space would be used by the Durham Business College. By 1956 the structure took on the name the Commonwealth Building likely because of the Commonwealth Credit Corp. now in it. This company may have been part of the Bentsen family investments. In the early 60s the condition of the building was such that only a few occupants were in it. One was Storey's Gun and Fishing Tackle Shop. It is empty by early 1984 and an effort is made to secure a \$250,000 Urban Development Action Grant to refurbish the 26,000 sq. ft. structure. This fails. By May 1984 it is scheduled for demolition as termites have devastated much of its wooden interior.

Martin Guenzel, a native of Germany, (together with his wife Elizabeth) arrives in the Valley to take up welding work. This line of work will later grow into a metal fabricating business. His son Rudolph (Rudi) works in the business until he was graduated from the University of Texas in 1942. Martin's nephew Lawrence Carl Guenzel would then enter the business. By 1963 L.C. Guenzel has expanded Metal Products Co. into a 24,000 square foot facility on North 77 Sunshine Strip. L.C. after serving 44 months in the US Navy during WWII serves as a city commissioner and a director for the Harlingen National Bank. His son Gary will later carry on the business.

Early in this year the two-story building at 109 E. Jackson is constructed. It will house the Packard Furniture Company.

3/23/23 Material for construction of the Van Noy Company restaurant near the railroad depot has arrived. This firm has a concession for restaurants along the Gulf Coast Lines trackage. The Van Noy Interstate Company, a national firm, builds a restaurant and depot waiting room just north of the Harlingen train depot whose architectural style it follows. This firm specialized in serving railroad passengers and published and sold maps, postcards, scenic books, and the like.

4/6/23 R. E. Hubbard, recently of Mansfield, Louisiana, purchases the property at the corner of Harrison and the San Benito Road to construct a complete service filling station. One half of the lot will be operated for tourists as a camp ground. He moved into the Brown house recently vacated by Dr. W. M. Driskell, the dentist with an office over the Planters State Bank..

1924 The Gulf Coast Line operating into Harlingen is purchased by the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

This year L.R. Daniels comes to the Valley. It is also the year that this native of Transylvania, LA born 4/14/63 marries Clara A. Cazavas of New Orleans on 12/24/24. He served in WWI as first lieutenant with the Victoria Rifles. Before coming to Harlingen to be owner and manager of the Harlingen Steam Laundry he served as president of the McAllen C of C and four years as the LRGV C of C as well as president

of the McAllen Auto Club. He is a charter member of the McAllen Rotary Club, a member of the Presbyterian Church, and a Shriner. At home, 418 E. Tyler, with Mrs. Daniels is daughter Alva.

James Laurese (J.L.) Head arrives in the Valley from Louisiana. His wife, Juanita, was here in 1921. For fifty years he will be the owner-operator of the J.L. Head Insurance Agency, later the Head and Lee Insurance Agency. When he was a City Commissioner he pushed for the military airfield here in 1941. He was active in the formation of the Tip of Texas Girl Scouts and was its finance chairman in 1943. He and the Lions Club helped raise funds to purchase a barracks and move it to Bowie Park for use by the Girl Scouts. He had helped to organize the Lions Club here and was to be honored as a life member. He served on the board of the Valley Baptist Hospital and had a fire station named after him because he had also served as the city's fire commissioner. In addition he helped to organize and was first president of the Harlingen Country Club.

1924 is also the year a building boom allows the establishment of retail and wholesale lumber companies in Harlingen. H.H. Hardin of Fort Worth establishes a wholesale yard and sales office here to be followed by LeRoy Morris of the Frontier Lumber Company of Brownsville. Retail firms by 1925 include the Taylor Lumber Co. managed by J.C. Atchison, the W.S. Liddell Co., the South Texas Lumber Co., and the Spencer-Sauer Lumber Co. with David W. Day, manager.

In this year G.D. Guest is licensed by the city to operate a "hamburger and chili" wagon across the street from the Rialto Theater on the NW corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Jackson. In this period also Anderson and Wadsworth lease a portion of Bowie Park to house tourists in tents at 50 cents per night.

7/24 Claude Hayden Hamilton and his wife Aline Arnette, both from Falls County, TX, come to town with their four year old son C.H., Jr. They had been married in Marlin, TX. 9/20/16. He comes to join his brother R.B. Hamilton who is in the insurance business with John B. Challes. In 1935 he is appointed postmaster, a position he will hold until 1961. He is to die in 1968 and she in 1989. Both are active in the First Baptist Church. He is in the Kiwanis Club; she a charter member of the Fine Arts Club. Their son will graduate from Baylor in 1941, serve in the U.S. Navy in WWII, marry Dorothy Lynn Berry from Gilmer, return here in 1945, and, after earning a CPA becomes a partner in a Harlingen accounting firm, retiring 40 years later. Along with parenting four children both C.H. and Lynn, who teaches school, are very active in church, sports, and civic activities.

J.J. Willingham born in Jewett, Leon County, Texas comes to town and enters the realty business. This Baptist is to serve the community as chairman of the Community Chest. He is to die in an automobile accident near Beeville at age 44 on 8/29/41.

1924 Elam Clay Breedlove comes from Oklahoma this year. He is first involved in banking in San Benito. He joins the First National Bank in 1937 as vice-president and in 1945 becomes its president. He will serve 20 years on the city's water board. This member of the First Baptist Church and a Mason is to die in Late March 1969.

1924-25 The Valley Electric and Ice Company approaches the mark of icing 13,000 railroad cars. It handles each one twice, first for a pre-cooling, then a final icing. At the peak of the season 100 men are employed. The manufacturing building exists today though the lengthy docks which stretched between parallel railroad tracks and carried the ice to the refrigerated cars are long gone. Ice Plant No. 39 Harlingen is on the building. It

likely indicates that this was one of many plants operated by the American Refrigerator Transit Company to provide ice for its specialized railroad freight cars.

1925 This is the year that Miller Harwood arrives in Harlingen. He was born in Gonzales TX 12/18/87. He attended the U. of Virginia and UT, marrying Clair Leverton 11/24/09. He served as city treasurer, was Rotary Club president, and a member of the First Presbyterian Church. Together with L.W. Hoskins he will develop the East Taylor Street area.

L.W. Hoskins born in Terrill, TX 12/30/87 makes his way to Harlingen this year. He will be president of L.W. Hoskins Realty. With only a high school education, he serves in WWI as a first lieutenant in the Air Service. He marries Dorothy K. Kuykendall in June 1921. This Episcopalian is also a Mason, Odd Fellow, Knight of Pythias, Rotary, and American Legion member.

T.S. Herren, who will also be in real estate, comes this same year. A native of Dadeville, AL born 10/9/65, he attended Howard College in Birmingham. He married Anne Cumbee on 4/5/95. In Dadeville, he was for 20 years in mercantile and the livestock business. This Baptist was also a Knight of Pythias. His Harlingen real estate office will later be in the Baxter Building. Mrs. Herren, the mother of four, was also from Alabama. She was one of the prime promoters for the construction of the Woman's Building. D.R. McNamara advertises his Sun Valley Warehouse with its railroad siding dock of 1000". By 1930 there is no mention of it.

1/1/25 The Missouri Pacific System acquires the Gulf Coast Lines, including its St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway Company. The latter's name is retained into the 1950s. It also acquires the San Benito and Rio Grande Railway Company. Both are the major servers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

1925 The Aldridge-Washmon Company becomes the dealership for International.

1/25 F.G. Jackson takes up seed and feed business at 119 N. Commerce and later sets up Jackson Wholesale Grocery Co. at 101 E. Polk. He purchases the former from J.W. Rhone who advertised it for sale. Jackson is a native of Delta County, TX, has completed academics at E. Texas Normal School College in Commerce, was a bookkeeper for an oil mill, a cashier at a bank in Enloe, and manager of the Security State Bank of Cooper, TX before coming here.

Also in this period Seaman O. Eidman is to have his pharmacy in the first floor of the Lon C. Hill Building on Van Buren. The pioneer competitor, Harlingen Pharmacy, is now under the management of Clarence Myers. A.A. Taylor who this year operates a new and beautiful jewelry store of modern brick and tile construction will by 1930 simply be listed as a traveling salesman.

1/8/25 The Valley State Bank organized here in 3/24 now has \$544,995 in reserves. Just to its north the G.C. Howell Building is erected.

2/25 A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Harlingen shows a large "moving picture" structure on the northwest corner of Matamoros (now E) and W. Harrison Streets just across the street from Porfiro Diaz (now Gutierrez) Park. It is also shown on the July 1929 map. Immediately adjacent to its west is a drug store and a short way down the block on the same side is a dance hall. This theater obviously catered to Hispanics. In the 1931-32 telephone directory this theater at 602 W. Harrison is named the Park Theatre. It is owned or managed by M. F. Dobbs. He and his wife Faye reside on the Combes

Highway. By 1935 the theater is no more and has either been subdivided into a residence for four occupants or a new structure has been constructed on the site.

4/24/25 N.S. and Vance Liddell build a two story four-unit apartment house costing \$10,000 on North Hill Street.

On this same date the railroad adds two new faster passenger trains to Valley service. It boasts 10 and 12 hour times to San Antonio and Houston respectively.

A subscription to the weekly *Harlingen Star* costs \$2.00 a year.

Chris Daments and Joe Hauft operate the popular City Bakery and Candy Kitchen at 113 North A.

W.L. Parker from Sentinel, OK is to open his Alcove Confectionary this year and operate it for seven years. When this First Baptist Church member dies at age 83 on 3/13/62 he leaves behind his son Eunis Lee Parker of Harlingen.

In this year O.P Searle advertises that his has been Harlingen's first furniture store. In early January 1925 he moves into a new building at the corner of Monroe and Hill. Still going in 1928, the business vanishes by 1930. When he dies in Corpus Christi 8/12/61, it is noted that he had a store there for 28 years.

1/30/25 After an extension is to be made on the current freight depot , a new one is planned for near-term erection.

3/13/25 E.R. Templeton opens a cash and carry grocery store in the building formerly occupied by Neil Madeley.

3/27/25 A.L. Brooks completes the building to the north of the Rhone Store. Part of it is leased to the F.D. Ray Motor Co., a Chevrolet dealership, Household Furniture, and R. Fulton Jones Transfer. At this time more than 50 lots are sold at auction by the Harlingen Development Company. Prices paid range from \$271 for a lot to \$675. They are located on Mexico Street next to the new hospital.

July 1925 In the third week of this month new owners begin publication of the paper.

They are granted a state charter to incorporate. The name of the new firm is the Star Printing Company. The stock is held in the names of R. M. Gillmore, president, W.J. Baldwin, secretary-treasurer, and their wives. They announce that the purchase has been self-financed, that they are experienced in publishing, and that a larger investment is to be made to improve the equipment and increase volume. Working in the printing press room was Blufton Utterback who had been in Harlingen at least since 1921.

2/25 A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of this date for Harlingen shows a large "moving picture" structure on the northwest corner of Matamoros (now E) and W. Harrison Streets just across the street from Porfiro Diaz (now Gutierrez) Park. It is also shown on the July 1929 map. Immediately adjacent to its west is a drug store and a short way down the block on the same side is a dance hall. This theater obviously catered to Hispanics. It ceased to operate sometime after 1932.

7/13/25 Work is to start on the \$100,000 hotel of Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Burk, formerly of Decatur, AK. He has had experience operating a tourist hotel in Chattanooga, TN. Two of the three lots upon which it will be sited were donated by the Harlingen Development Co. and the C of C put forth a \$5,000 cash bonus. After reviewing bids, Mr. Burk decided to take on the construction himself. The hotel to be built would become the Reese-Wilmond. The name is taken from that of three sons, Reese, William and Raymond.



7/24/25 The Valley Baptist Hospital on Mexico Street (F Street) has its formal opening. At this time it has 19 rooms in two wards and costs to-date are \$75,000 exclusive of grounds.

7/31/25 C.A. Boren reveals the opening of his hotel in the new Brown Building on E. Jackson.

8/1925 Chris Damants and Joe Hauft build a new Rex Theater on the southwest corner of W. Monroe and A Streets facing Searle Furniture. Constructed by R.E. Ewing for \$40,000, it seats 700. It is leased to Pickens. By 1927 it was too small to accommodate the increasing number of movie fans. On 9/24/26 a new theater corporation is announced, Valley Theaters, Inc. L.L. Dent is president, W.E. Paschall, treasurer, and D.B. Pickens, secretary. Jack Pickens, v.p. and manager of the Rialto and Rex is included in the new corporation. Six months later the group announces that it will construct a 1,500 seat theater, the largest south of San Antonio, across from the Rialto. A beautiful sketch of the building to be named The Aztec appears in the paper. Nine months later on 12/27 plan changes are announced. The Rex will be closed in January 1928 so its interior can be rebuilt at a cost of \$160,000. It is enlarged by building a new structure right over the old one. A pipe organ is also installed. This was to be the Acadia Theater. It had its grand opening 5/1/28. The Acadia will burn down in 1970. Audiences at the Rex saw their first "talkie" on 2/14/27. It featured Edward Everett Horton and Louise Fazenda in "The Terror." The premier movie in the new Acadia was Richard Dix in "Easy Come, Easy Go."

8/7/25 The Southern Pacific applies to the state for a permit to extend its line from Edinburg to Harlingen.

11/25 A 70 ton icing unit is added to the plant south of Wilson Road. Additional storage and improvement are also made. A smaller Commerce Street plant is also improved. By this year the upper floor (or part of it) of the S. Lozano building appear to have been put to use as the Gateway Hotel 107 ½ S. A Street.

4/1/26 Glenn C. Farris establishes a lumber company of his own in Harlingen at 221 W. Washington. Glenn had worked with his father James in the same business in Denton, TX and then on his own and with a partner in Amarillo as Farris-Moore. He is a native of Mill Creek OK, having been born there in 1901. He attended the North Texas State Teachers College. He served in the U.S. Navy in WWI. This Methodist married Madge Hackler on 3/1/24. Farris has competition in the older lumber establishment of the Taylor Lumber Company managed by J.C. Atchison.

7/30/26 *The Harlingen Star* headline reads "Harlingen Will Have 7-Story Office Building". It goes on to say that R.W. Baxter from Dermott, AK has bought the vacant site at the corner of A and Jackson Streets for \$17,000 cash. He purchased it from Domingo R. Rotke, Jr. It previously housed a saloon which had burned down a year ago. The work on the \$125,000 building was planned to start 11/1/26. Mr. Baxter had also purchased some lots near the Central Ward School and was already here with his family. Later the firm of Elwing and Mulhausen are selected as architects and R.P. Blythe as contractor. On 2/15/27 it is announced that the building will be 9 stories and cost \$160,000.

This same month John Myrick tells of his plan to build a "flatiron building" on the 100 block of S. Commerce. At the same time the Madison Apartments (near Bowie Park) are underway. The two-story brick structure is being erected by N.S. Liddell.

8/3/26 Clarence Sherman arrives from Leander, TX for an extended stay. He is with the Starnes and Sherman System of stores. Several months earlier the Jackson Street store was already bearing the name Starnes-Sherman Grocers. On this same date J.A. Seagrove and W.E. Johnson announce plans to build a 150 car, \$30,000 garage on the 100 block of Jackson. J.R. McLemore is to be the architect and R.E. Ewing the builder. It never gets erected.

8/6/26 Chris Daments' Hotel Daments opened 6/8. The two-story building cost \$123,000. Its ground floor will house a café, shoe store, electric fixture store, barber shop, and cleaning establishment as well as the lobby. By October a roof garden to cost \$45,000 is to be added. In November 1928 it advertises "The most home-like hotel in the Valley", a room for one \$5.00 a week without a bath, \$8 for two. C.C. Hinds is the hotel manager. By mid-November 1928 Mr. & Mrs. William W. Langham will be operating the Close Inn restaurant in the hotel, having taken over the premise started in July by Mr. & Mrs. H. G. Whisler and known as the Am-Café. In late 1929 \$18,000 is spent remodeling the hotel.

W.J. Baldwin is manager of the *Harlingen Star* which also takes in commercial printing. Around this same time Cowan and Sons are proprietors of the semi-weekly (Tues. & Fri.) *Harlingen Star*. George Cowan is the advertising manager and E. O. Arnold is editor. The latter is replaced by Otto A. Vinke in late August 1926. Vinke has had experience as editor of the *Fort Worth Record* and with the *San Antonio Express*. His parents live in Rio Hondo. He will die before 1939 leaving his wife Josephine a widow.

8/24/26 According to W.G. Payne, fiscal agent, \$100,000 has been subscribed toward a \$300,000 Valley cotton mill. It will have 5,000 spindles and manufacture light-weight cotton material from the Valley's long staple cotton. The mill employing 150 would open in mid-March 1927 in a plant costing \$300,000 next to the Arroyo Colorado.

9/21/26 Southwestern Bell Telephone Company tells of plans to erect a \$100,000 telephone exchange on Van Buren and 4th.

10/12/26 Missouri Pacific publicizes that it will locate repair shops, a huge storage yard, engine tracks and other improvements in Harlingen. It will then be able to handle 967 cars versus 534 at present. About two years back the Gulf Coast Line became part of the Missouri Pacific. A month later it tells of plans to build a \$66,000 L-shaped freight depot at Commerce and Harrison. The lot is already cleared and a spur track is being laid. By 3/25/27 the \$67,000 complex is in place. The two-story fireproof building 40 by 60' cost \$36,224. In this year L.H. Moore is MoPac's division passenger agent.

11/1/26 is the date Charles Russell Mayfield comes to Harlingen where he will become a partner in the law firm of Hornaday and Mayfield. Their office is in the Valley State Bank Building at 124 W. Jackson. Born in Kosciusko, MI 5/8/96, he was educated at the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State Teachers College. He married Annie Ruth Stevens of Big Springs, MI on 4/12/18. This Baptist is a member of the American Legion and Lions Club. Mrs. Mayfield and children Annie Ruth, Ruth Kent, and Charles Russell, Jr. spend the summers in Big Springs. At age 36 Mr. Russell will have a tragic end, dying of acute indigestion.

Ned N. Sondock comes late in the year and resides at the Verser House while waiting for his wife Tillye (later anglicized to Tillie) in Houston to give birth to their son Gerald (Jerry) (b.3/27/27). They then both move to Harlingen. Ned will later found Delta Office Furniture Co. with Abe I. Axelrod, a cousin working for Edelsteins Furniture. In 1935 the partnership was terminated. It will evolve into Delta Office Supply. The first store is located at 115 North A before the Sondock building is erected around 1940 at 117 W. Jackson. Son Marvin is born at home 9/28/33 at 1021 E. Filmore where the family resides until 1945. They then purchase Marcella Gafney Long's uniquely designed homestead on Palm Blvd. Sondock will die 1/1/60 at age 57 leaving his wife and sons. This Mason was one of the founders of Temple Beth Israel and a scout leader. He was also a strong promoter of Harlingen as the retailing shopping center of the Valley. Upon Ned's death Jerry and Marvin inherit Delta Office Supply while their mother is to open Delta Gift Bazaar. Marvin will go on to manage Discount Office Furniture.

It is 1926 that Tate Parker and his family arrive in the Valley from Ennis, TX. After a time in the Lyford-Raymondville area, they move to Harlingen. In WWII he serves on the Selective Service Committee. This Mason taught school in Primera for three years, was a member of the Optimist Club, helped Boy Scouting, and owned the Harris Electric Co. from 1950 to 1980. He then worked for the Lewis Electric Co. until retiring in 1987. Dying in on 10/10/95, he leaves one son and two daughters.

The Miller Bicycle Store opens this year.

Joseph "Joe" K. Junkin is selling furniture at 211-3 W. Monroe. In 1931 he will have moved into the building at 124 North A Street across from the Arcadia Theater. By 1941 he will move into the spacious two-story building that has been vacated by Wroten Motors at 516 W. Jackson. The Olympus Gym moves in when Junkin's Fine Furniture vacates this site in 1990, only to close a few years later in smaller premises at its warehouse at 1402 W. Jackson. The 516 W. Jackson location had actually been sold to Hiron's and Trower of Edinburg in the mid-1980s. A fire in the rear of the premise put it out of business.

In this year A.L. Brooks is car lot distributor for Texas Fruits and Vegetables as well as the president of A.L. Brooks Co. He is also a fertilizer distributor. Born in Tyler, TX, he attended the Summer Select School in Omen, TX. He married Anne L. Hubbard on 8/16/99. Past president of Kiwanis, this Baptist is also a Mason.

The Trammels are new to Harlingen in 1926. William L. Trammel is the president and general manager for the Valley Baking Company. He is originally from Altmore, AL having been born there 12/17/95. He was educated at Altmore High School and in Long Beach, CA. He was 16 months in the army in WWI before marrying Claribel Dorringer of Illinois 5/17/2. They reside at 101 W. Buchanan with daughter Billie Faye before moving on to E. Taylor.

There are 128 business establishments at this time.

Pushing sales this year were the La Turno Printing Company, Ben Epstein's Broadway Men's Shop with "Distinctive apparel for men and boys", J.W. Gardner with photographic studios both in Harlingen and Pharr, Abner L. Lewis and Co. specializing in municipal securities, and the Electric Service Station managed by S.S. Bobo.

In Combes this year there are three general merchandise outfits: J.D. Templeton, Madeley Mercantile Company, and E.W. Shaw. L. E. Hargrave is running a service station and John Milan is a real estate agent.

1926-27 The Southern Pacific Railroad through its subsidiary Texas and New Orleans Railroad with its San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway, completes its 135 mile line from Falfurrias to Edinburg. On 2/15/27 the tracks reach Harlingen and on 3/10/27 the line is operational to Harlingen. In June work begins to extend the line to Brownsville and on 10/21/27 the work train reaches there with a freight one to follow the next day. On 11/10/27 Brownsville passenger service commences. W.L. Hollingsworth, who was a conductor for the SP on its first trip to Brownsville, is also on the last trip of the SP connection of daily passenger service from Brownsville to McAllen in the 1950s.

1927 Fount Ray and Tom Nolan launch Rio Grande Building and Loan Association. They soon sell it to insurance and loan man Gerald McKenna, who in turn sells it to Fred Flynn, its associate manager, in 1928 when it has but \$400 in deposits and only two residential loans. Clyde Fincher takes over in the 1970s. Its bankruptcy in the late 1980s when it is the Rio Grande Savings and Loan Association leaves its depositors, uninsured by FDIC but attracted by slightly higher interest rates, with large losses.

1927 Robert W. Baxter begins constructing the Valley's tallest building at nine stories on the southwest corner of A and Jackson Streets. The lot is empty because the multi-storied frame building that once stood on it burned to the ground several years previously. By late September some tenants have moved in. Initially called the Baxter Building, it is renamed the Rio Grande National Life Insurance Building in January 1929 after he forms this company. He is a principle of the \$100,000 stock company together with Drs. James R. Doss and J. W. Davis of McAllen. The Rio Grande Pharmacy occupies part of the ground floor. The building was home to the offices of numerous professionals including Dr. George Gallaher. Several decades later the widow of entrepreneur John McKelvey will purchase the property, and it will be called the McKelvey Building.

Baxter was born 6/22/85 in Montecello, AR and attended public schools. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan and became a lawyer. In 1917 he served in the Arkansas legislature and was for six years county attorney for Warren, Arkansas. He was also an alderman in Dermott, AK. He married Sallie Murphey of Warren 7/21/18. Residing with them at 610 E. Van Buren are children Robert, Tommy, Murphey, and Brian. This Rotarian's bid to be elected city commissioner in 1928 falls short.

1927 The Southern Pacific System railroad line reaches Harlingen from San Antonio. In February freight service begins, and on 5/20, on a Sunday night, the first passenger service begins. A beautiful passenger station (illustrated in the 4/1/27 newspaper) in southwestern style is built on Jefferson Street alongside the tracks which will be extended southeast via Los Fresnos and then south on the west side of Las Paredes Road (FM1847) into Brownsville by 10/22/27. Years after passenger service ceases, the building is offered for sale to the city for a nominal sum but is turned down. The impressive structure is then demolished in 1975.

1927 Hygeia Milk Products Company is organized by Dr. James Traylor, whose wife is principal of the Alamo School. Dr. Traylor's partners are Tyre H. Brown, B.M. Hollon, and Link B. Martin. The original plant at 215 North A is managed by Harvey L. Richards, Sr., a June graduate of Texas A&M College. Richards, who will serve as a major in the Army Air Force in WWII, will continue his aviation interest as Chairman of the Airport Board. The first significant municipal airport facility will be named in his

honor. In July 1927 bottling and distribution, by a one horse drawn wagon, begins from the plant with a capacity of 60 gallons per day. The firm opened its popular Hygeia Dairy Bar on F Street in 1946. It would serve as a place for employees to have a coffee break and to promote the company's products with customers. This same year a plant was opened in Brownsville. This was to be followed by one in McAllen in 1950 and in Corpus Christi 1954-55. In 1964 the company acquired a dairy farm with 1,300 acres 2,000 cows, and 1,700 calves and heifers near Bayview; this was sold in the early 1990s. Hygeia to have an operation on the King Ranch, six convenience stores (later to be named Maverick), the computer center, Tabulating Systems and Services, and acquire in 1972 Knolle Milk and Ice Cream in Corpus Christi. On November 30, 1999 Hygeia was sold to Oaks Farms Dairy Company, a subsidiary of Southern Foods.

This same year the RGV Telephone exchange building at a cost of \$150,000 is constructed on the northwest corner of 4th and Van Buren. It will expand four times in the next 33 years.

1/25/27 R.M. Schumaker, the largest wholesale grocer in the south, announces plans to erect a warehouse on Taylor where it meets the railroad track.

2/11/27 The Mercedes Creamery tells of plans to build a branch plant on two lots west (219 W. Madison) of the Daments Hotel. Business is so good for Searle Furniture that it adds a third floor to its store at W. 2nd and Monroe.

3/11/27 Grand Opening of F.W. Woolworth at 113 W. Jackson. It advertises "Nothing sold in this store for more than 15 cents." The competition apparently brings the demise of Watters Variety Store. It closes 12/7/27. J.C. Penny, another competitor, will have opened by November.

3/27 The three story Boren Hotel is in business at the corner of Jackson and 3rd.

In this year M.D. Dugger, Jr. comes to the Valley. The next year he will become general agent in Harlingen for Franklin Life Insurance. He was born 11/28/97 in Waco, TX and educated at Meridian College and UT. He served in WWI in the Aviation Corps, marrying Edna Ann Worthen 4/15/21. This Methodist Church member is also a Lion and American Legion member.

Also arriving is Claude Oliver Ward from Rosebud, TX. This WWI veteran will become a roofing contractor and be associated with the Frontier Lumber Co. at 314 North 8th. At age 72 he passes on 8/19/61.

It is 1927 that Van Snell's father, who is in real estate in Hammond, LA, is attracted by Valley opportunities, buys land near Donna, and then moves there where he takes up citrus culture. Van will go on to Edinburg Junior College where he meets his future wife Kitty. He then works at the USDA Laboratory in Weslaco before entering a lengthy eventful career as cannery manager with H.E.B. He works 32 years building and managing the Harlingen Canning Company. He was one of those instrumental in the development of the Port of Harlingen, served the Chamber of Commerce, helped to found Tropical Savings and Loan Co., was a Rotary and First Methodist Church member, and was president of the Harlingen Housing Authority Board as well as one which disposed of the former Harvey Richards Field area. Preceded by his wife of 60 years, Kathryn Vaughn Snell, Van Snell is to die in Harlingen at age 94 on July 16, 2005. He leaves a daughter, Ada Kay St. John of Mercedes, and a son Kenneth of Austin along with grandchildren and great grandchildren.

11/18/27 The first unit of 84 rooms of the to be 150 room Moore (later Madison)Hotel opens. The Reese-Wil-Mond also opens its first unit of 65 rooms, an additional wing of 65 to open later.

12/20/27 The three story Palmer Apartment Building at Tyler and 6th is completed. Built by Dr. A. J. Palmer at the cost of \$60,000 it is one of the most modern in the Valley.

Also seeing its start as a popular gathering place is Roy Porter's Hi-Way Inn located at 312 South F Street between Harrison and Tyler. Later to be open 24 hours a day, it proclaims "4 Corners-Harlingen" and "We never close." The four corners moniker comes from the fact that this heavily-trafficked area has a service station on each corner. The café has a long existence but is closed after 1983. For many years prior to its closing it is the gathering place for Latino teenagers. It is replaced by the Mexican food restaurant Las Cazuelas owned by the Medrano family.

1/1/28 R.E. (Bob) Johnson arrives in town to take the position as Southern Pacific district freight manager and passenger agent. In January 1963 after nearly 36 years in the RGV with SP Bob will retire and be honored at a party where 60 attend.

9/28 Harlingen is added to the Rio Grande Valley Gas Company system when a residence is metered on North 12th Street. The system was commenced in 1927 with outlets at McAllen, Mercedes, La Feria, San Benito, and Brownsville. The company was incorporated in Delaware by a group of investors headed by Judge John W. Gaines of San Antonio. Initially the source of gas was Jim Hogg County from which a twelve inch pipeline transported the gas to San Benito and an eight inch one from there to Brownsville. By 1936 gas sources within the lower valley had been discovered in Mercedes, La Blanca, and elsewhere, and these became the source of local gas.

1928 On November 3 Sears, Roebuck, and Company opens a large, two story store on the 900 block of W. Harrison. The architect-builder of the large building is W.I. McLemore, who is also responsible for building numerous residences in the city. He will later return to Louisiana. The building has 100' frontage and 140' depth. The store's owner-manager and major promoter is the robust-sized Albert L. Benoist, who will also get involved in real estate, be president of the C of C, a member of the Harlingen Planning and Zoning Board, and be a member of Rotary. In 1925 Albert had come to Harlingen with his father as a winter visitor. They then purchased 12.5 acres between W. Harrison and Tyler. It was on this parcel that Sears was developed after Benoist went to Dallas and convinced the company to build a store in Harlingen. In August 1928 Sears invited him to San Antonio and offered him the position of manager of the new Harlingen store, a position he held for 18 years until his retirement in 1947. When Sears moves to the newly developed Valley Vista Mall the premise is occupied by Johnny's True Value Hardware store. In the 1960s A.L. Benoist and Company office will be at 306 South Eye Street. It will deal primarily with rental properties including apartments. Albert and Hattie's daughter Valerie will marry Wesley Adams.

The five story fireproof Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel is erected by hotel operator and owner, John J. Burk. It also has a roof garden and a finished floor for dancing along with a moveable stage for vaudeville presentations. It is on First Street corner of Van Buren and will one day be transformed into low-income adult housing as the Heritage Manor. In 1928 it bills itself as the "Traveling Man's and Convention Headquarters of the Valley."

It features large sample rooms for salesmen to show off their wares. Its room rates are \$2.50/day down. Mr. Burk will serve as a City Commissioner 12/33-1/36.

At a cost of \$28,000 Roque Herrera, who had been involved in construction here since early 1916, builds a hotel and restaurant at 308 S. C Street but loses possession due to cost overruns. He pays \$150 a month to a San Antonio loan company but loses the 4,750 square foot building the first year. While on the C Street side the upper floors will serve as the Valley Hotel, the ground floor along Harrison will hold the City Pharmacy. Romulo (Romeo) Castillo purchases it in 1940 or 42 from the previous owner for \$18,000 and operates Romeo's Cafe here, prior to its occupancy by his Ro-Ca Loans in 1974 and his 1975 bail bond business, Ro-Ca Bail Bonds. He operated the latter at the 401 W. Harrison side until his retirement at age 93 in 2005. Romeo was born 2/28/1912 in Zaragoza, N. L., Mexico and came to Harlingen at age 8. He was to die at the end of January 2006. He was president of the Pan American Golf Assoc., a charter member of Life Begins at Forty, on the Board of Directors of the Harlingen Housing Authority, and still a rancher and landowner in Zaragoza. His Harlingen survivors include his wife of 53 years, Maria Idolina, daughter Juana C. Cortez and son Romulo, Jr. of Harlingen, and a daughter Luz Martinez in Laredo.

Also in 1928 a Mexican army officer in exile designs and builds an elaborately styled two story brick building for his mother-in-law, Tomasa Villareal Garza, at 323 W. Harrison. With a grocery store in the front and Cortez Cleaners in the rear, there was also a rooming house upstairs. Mrs. Garza loses the building in the 1930s depression. Later it houses an auto parts store and becomes Flores Cleaners in the 1990s. [A fire is to destroy it in July 2010.]

H. (Howard) E. (Edward) Butt borrows \$38,000 and moves to the Rio Grande Valley acquiring three small stores thereby beginning the major expansion of the grocery retailing company which will become the giant H-E-B dominating South Texas grocery sales. One of the stores is the Piggly Wiggly at 123 E. Jackson. It opens 9/29/28. Howard E. Butt, its owner, moves the headquarters of his developing grocery business to Harlingen. In the 1930s Howard's business will grow to more than 28 stores in the Rio Grande Valley and South Texas.

Mr. Butt was born 4/9/95 in Memphis, TN and died 3/12/91 in Corpus Christi, TX. It was his mother Florence who took on the grocery business after the family moved to Kerrville in 1905. After serving in the navy in WWI, he reentered the grocery business, later failing at four expansions in other towns. He married Mary Elizabeth Holdsworth of Kerrville on 12/5/24. In 1935 he began calling his stores the H. E. Butt Grocery Company and in 1946 changed the name to H.E.B., still later modernized to H-E-B. He was to be involved in numerous community endeavors as was his wife. Mary was born in Loma Vista, TX 2/4/03 and was to die in Corpus Christi 10/6/93 survived by three children. Her interests focused on child health care, the aged, YWCA, libraries, education, and other philanthropic services.

The three-story Moore Hotel (later renamed the Madison in late 1930) is erected at 121 Van Buren alongside the old Mooreland Hotel soon scheduled for demolition. In 1950 the Madison itself will be torn down to make way for construction of an office building whose primary occupant is Tropical Savings and Loan. Its manager is J.V. Murphy. It proclaims "Where traveling men covering Southwest Texas stay because of the

hospitality shown them and the service rendered." Each of its 150 rooms has a bath; rates range from \$1.50 to \$3.00.

7/3/28 Delta Planing Mill Inc. of Harlingen is incorporated with \$30,000 stock. J.H. and D.C. Raybourn and Alfred Freburg are principles.

Ben Epstein's Broadway Men's Store which suffered a fire several weeks ago is set to reopen while its proprietor is on his honeymoon.

7/13/28 The Fisk Tire Co. opens its new store with \$50,000 of inventory at 701 W. Harrison. The manager is Max Bobo. At the same time G. E. McLelland opens his Industrial Service Station on N. Commerce at Adams.

7/17/28 Sandlin Furniture owned by W. J. Sandlin opens in the Nelson Building at Monroe and A streets. This building also houses the Hicks Rubber Co.

7/24/28 Announcement is made of the Sears, Roebuck lease of a 25,000 sq.ft. store and 5,000 sq. ft. warehouse to be erected on W. Harrison by A. E. Benoist and his son A. L.

8/21/28 Tri-weekly *Harlingen Star* becomes a five day a week plus Sunday newspaper under new ownership. The Star Publishing Company is purchased by Howard Barrett of Abilene. (In 1930 its offices will be at 118 North A Street.) Home delivery by newspaper boys goes into effect 8/24. Its new Duplex Press capable of printing and folding 6,000 copies an hour goes into operation about the end of September. With AP newswire reports the nature of the paper changes from a local to a national and international emphasis when it goes daily on 12/1/28.

8/28/28 G. C. Howell and Dr. J. N. Green to lease to Montgomery Ward the two story, 140' x 50", \$35,000 building they will erect at Monroe and First Streets.

At the cost of \$6,500, 24 city blocks will be paved and N. 1st widened.

11/16/28 By this date Edelsteins has moved from its Commerce Street location to 221 W. Jackson. 11/11/28 The new Baker Building at Commerce, Van Buren and A Streets is sold for over \$100,000 to realtor D.B. Meadows, his son B.E. Meadows, both of Harlingen, and M.E. Mitchell of La Feria. It is a two story fireproof structure with eight stores on its ground floor and 45 office spaces on the second floor. It has gas heating and Frigidaire air cooling. Its original building permit was for \$80,000. B. E. is to manage it as the Commerce Building.

This year E.G. Atlee starts a printing business in the Embee Building, formerly the Wittenbach Building, at 119 South A. In 1941 the business is sold to the Quincy A. Main Printing Co. and moved to 527 N. Commerce where in 1960 it was the oldest plant of its type under continuous ownership.

The year also sees the commencement (7/29/28) of 24-hour service at the newly opened Gulf filling station at Harrison and 1st Streets. It is the city's first such of that kind.

By November 1928 the *Lower Rio Grande Valley Magazine*, a monthly, is up to Vol. 5 No.5. Selling for 10 cents a copy or \$1 a year its editor is Kenneth W. Calvin and it is published by E. C. Watson with offices in the Baxter building. Watson will later become business manager for *Texas Citriculture Magazine*.

Some other major projects not noted earlier for 1928 are the \$20,000 Lockhart Building on N. F Street, the \$30,000 Chrysler dealership at Van Buren and F of A.C. Baker of Edinburg, and the east Van Buren \$25,000 storage garage of R. E. Hubbard. The Harlingen industrial payroll for the year is pegged at \$2,626,000.

A weekly newspaper, *The Harlingen News*, also comes into being this year.. It sells for 50 cents per year or \$1 for three.



Mr. and Mrs. H.S. McBride arrive here in 1928. They will later own McBride's Coffee Shop that operates from 1939 until 1944. Mrs. McBride who was born in Butler, PA will pass away at age 66 on 6/1/48 leaving behind three sons and a daughter. She resided at 1113. E. Harrison.

11/25/28 L.R. Beatty, engineer of Electrical Research Products Inc. begins work installing the Vitaphone movie-tone equipment for talking movie pictures at the Acadia Theater. To be completed by December 14 according to Jack Pickens, manager, it will be the only "talkie" in the Valley.

1929 Harlingen has ten manufacturing establishments.

Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Shaw arrive in Harlingen, where he becomes a realtor. They were married 9/15/10 in South Dakota where they lived for 10 years then nine years elsewhere. They celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary at a get-together on 9/25/60. They live here 32 years before he dies in 1961. One of Mr. Shaw's competitors is Penry and Powers Real Estate also opening in 1929.

This year Oscar Newton Guilliland arrives from Sweetwater, OK. He owns a well-drilling business. This Calvary Baptist member dies at age 64 on 1/23/60 leaving his wife Ruth, two sons, Odie of Harlingen and Eddie of Albuquerque, and a daughter in Corpus Christi.

Sam and Clara Feldman are on their way from Victoria to settle in Brownsville when their car breaks down in Harlingen. The fates have them settle here. Both Feldmans are immigrants from Pinsk, Poland. By 1930 Mr. Feldman has established the Harlingen Iron and Metal Company near their home at 313 North 7th Street. It deals primarily with scrap metal. With the end of prohibition in 1933, he and a partner begin wholesale liquor distribution but the partner has to sell out due to contracting tuberculosis. In an effort to dispose of excess inventory Feldman begins retailing some and then goes into it full scale. The oldest son, Harry (b. 1925), starts college only to join the army in WWII during which he is wounded in Europe following the second wave of the Normandy invasion. Upon his return he is graduated from UT. His sibling, Charles (b.1932), is graduated from UT after attending other schools. He too will see service in the military in Europe but in the cold war period. Sam dies of a heart attack in 1953 thereby leaving his business in the hands of his sons. By 1960 Feldman's Valley Wide liquor stores will have nine stores in outlets here, Brownsville, San Benito, McAllen and Donna. Harry in 1965 will be killed in an automobile accident leaving the business for Charles to manage. In September 2001 the chain of stores is sold to Dennis Bowman, a Harlingen contractor, and semi-retired Ken Hayden, who has been involved with computers.

Some time in the 1920, the two-story brick building at 306 W. Jackson, just west of Harlingen Hardware, is built. It will house the Pepsi Cola plant and its manager will live upstairs. In 1945 an army surplus store comes to occupy it.

The Valley Marmon Company selling new Marmon 8 and Marmon Roosevelt Stock Sedans is operating at 122 S. F Street. C. G. Thornton is its manager.

1/1/29 A \$32,000 storage garage on E. Van Buren is being built by the Valley Development Co. for R. (Bob) E. Hubbard. The contractor is Bythe and Duerson. The 75' by 140' structure opens 4/20 at 110 E. Van Buren under the name Hubbard Storage and Service Station.

1/4/29 G.H. Winsor, who at one time ran the San Benito Railway, is named district manager by Missouri Pacific. Two weeks later MP is given approval to take over the seven bus lines in the LRGV including Black Diamond and Blue Border.

1/11/29 KRGV builds a three-room frame studio atop the Baxter Building. When it starts broadcasting from it on 2/22 it has five times (500 watts) the power it had when it commenced at 100 watts on 10/14/27 as KHMC with Dick Niles as its manager.. M.S. (Dick) Niles is president/manager while Judge H.L. Chapman is vp of the "Valley Voice", 1260 kilocycles.

4/11/29 Southwestern Bell transfers the remaining six ownerships, including the Harlingen exchange, there being 15 in all across the Valley to the Rio Grande Valley Telephone Company.

4/21/29 Southern Pacific names its Valley to Houston train the "Border Limited."

5/4/29 R.L. Hill and J.H. Morton open their new Harlingen Ice Co. plant on W. Jackson at D Street.

5/21/29 W. C. Brumley, Edinburg department store owner, commences remodeling W. E. Johnson's City Storage Garage between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, E. Jackson, in order to open his new store by July.

6/6/29 The Rialto Theater reopens after extensive remodeling, inside and out. It now seats 800 and has new carpeting and drapes plus a new organ to be played by Marjorie Short.

6/28/29 C. E. Stone, a Dallas based chain clothing/dry goods store with 50 units in Texas, opens in the updated former S. Lozano location. The latter has moved his store to Raymondville.

7/4/29 G.E. McLelland and L.E. Davanay open a new flour and feed service at 504 N. Commerce.

9/1/29 Brumley's Department Store opens at 114-116 E. Jackson. This sizeable store is the third for the firm that opened in Edinburg and Raymondville in 1927.

1929 This year A.A. Kimmell joined with Aldridge Hielscher Hardware Store of Brownsville to form the renamed Aldridge-Kimmell Co. It later was to open additional stores in San Benito and Los Fresnos. The latter was to close in the business downturn of the 1930s. Charles A. "Cut" Washmon was lured away from International Harvester in 1935 to help the business. By 1937 the name of the stores was changed to Aldridge-Washmon, and this name continued at least through 1985. It was to handle International Harvester equipment from the 1930s.

## People

1920 C.P. Bobo got here this year. Of French descent, he was born 7/20/57 in Smithville, AR. He married Ellen Harlow of Smithville on 1/12/88. Their children are Scott and Jesse. This Methodist and Mason became the president of the board of directors and manager of the Cameron County Water Improvement District No.1, having been elected to the board in 1922. He will later serve as a City Commissioner 12/31-12/33. He is to purchase the home at 521 E. Harrison formerly owned by Mayor Ross. A Bobo descendant will put it to use in the 1970s as a childcare facility.

In this year Louis Gilbert will arrive. Before dying at age 66 in 1940, he will have a 29-year career including chief mail clerk with the post office service. This Mason leaves

behind his wife Ida, sons Robert Edward " Mike" Gilbert who will be manager of the Arcadia Theater and later postmaster, and Arthur G. Gilbert plus two daughters, Mrs. Tommy Dunn of Weslaco and Mrs. Dorothy Glick of Harlingen.

Around 1920 R.E. Utley, a physician also arrived in the Valley. He was born in Neevah, Wisconsin 7/29/74 and had been graduated from Loyola University. After serving in the medical corps in WWI he married Bernice Smith of Topeka, KS on 6/13/19. In Harlingen he has a general practice, and also conducts surgery, x-ray diagnoses, and therapy. He is a Mason, Elk, and a Baptist Church member. He served as City Commissioner 12/37-12/39. Their home is 401 E. Harrison.

1920 It was this year that V. H. Tumlinson, a native of Verdi TX, and his wife Ora Lee Jackson of Pleasanton whom he married 7/12/15, moved to Stuart Place. There he served as superintendent of schools before moving on to San Perlita. He later moved to Cameron, TX where he ranched. The Tumlinson's son Pat died at Pearl Harbor and the Raymondville VFW Post was named in his honor. When V.H. dies at age 70 in 1960 he leaves behind Dr. William Tumlinson of Harlingen.

Leorah Rapp and her husband arrive here in January of this year. Their Model T soon becomes mired in the deep mud of Main Street in front of Mr. Halliburton's store named "Saw Dust Trail." Her husband will go on to operate several service stations around town. Likely in mid-1920 the Beck families arrive from Gainsville, Cooke County, Texas. Father Juirus and son Hewitt have been farming different entities there. Jairus is 65 years of age, his wife Alice 62. Dewitt Beck is 40 while his wife Georgia Ferguson Beck is 38. With them are Lettie, age 7, George Hulett Beck, a month shy of 5, and Robert C., 1. They take up residence at 621 and 617 E. Jackson respectfully. Father and son open the Fair Price Lumber Co. at 318 W. Washington Avenue. Later it will be renamed J. P. Beck and Son. Within ten years they will also own the four-tenant Beck Apartments at 627 E. Jackson. The Becks become members of the Church of Christ.

10/30/20 Albert R.(Tito) Leston is born this date to Albert A. and Luisa R. Leston. He will become a lifelong resident of Harlingen. In WWII he serves as a Marine and sees action on Guadalcanal. Once home he becomes a firefighter and rises to the position of Assistant Fire Chief while serving devotedly for 33 years in the Harlingen Fire Department. He is to die 1/20/08 at age 87 being survived by his wife of 58 years, Aida Galvan Leston, three daughters, and others.

1921 Guy Melvin Snavely, Sr. a businessman here since that date dies at age 78 on 8/5/60. He was a partner with L.E. Snavely in the Snavely Packing Company. He is survived by his wife Charlotte and daughter Mrs. Charlotte Griffen.

1921 Frank C. Brunneman arrives here this year. He becomes manager of the Corner Feed Store and member of the Board of Education. His father settled in Texas in 1883, and he was born in Flatonia ,TX 1/31/93, educated thru high school and at Texas A&M College. He serves 16 months with the U.S. Army in France during WWI. In 1920-23 he teaches at Harlingen High School. He then becomes Cameron County agricultural agent, a job he fulfills for 23 years. This Methodist Church member married Verda Nelson born in Synder, TX on 11/25/22. By 1929 they have children Robert, Nelson, and Cadwell. Brunneman's in-laws are early workers in the First Christian Church. R.W. Nelson will join John Myrick and C.E. Bowen in securing a note to pay off a \$6,000 debt.

In 1921 also Owen N. Echols came here to farm. On 2/9/61 age 67 he dies leaving his wife Ida and sons Lowell and Clovis.

It is this year that Horace Starnes sells his interest in a cotton gin and moves to Harlingen. Born in 1878 in Bechart, TN he is brought to Texas when age nine by parents who die six months later. Relatives then bring him to Leander in 1891. He quits school and later serves in the army in the Spanish American War. Returning to Leander in 1902 he marries Ella Rachel Bryson (b. 5/2/1877 in Leander). They have a daughter Viola Starnes, who will one day attend UT. In Harlingen he buys 50 acres of farmland on Wilson Road (the current site of Gutierrez Middle School.) He is also to own the grocery store at 112 E. Jackson. In 1929 he becomes manager of the CCWD No.1 and remains so until 1949. He is one of the founders of the Harlingen Country Club, Industrial Bank on A Street, and the Production Credit Union in 1934. After inviting his sister-in-law here she opens the first millinery shop on Jackson Street and is to marry Dan Botts, Sam's twin brother. Horace is to die in 1951 at age 73; Ella in 1982 at age 105; and their daughter Viola in 1983 at age 81. Jay Russell is his grandson.

James Effin Thomason comes here this year and for 40 years is a member of the First Baptist Church. He is to operate a men's furnishing store. When he dies at age 62 on 10/23/61, this resident of 1405 E. Tyler will leave only a sister Margaret Thomason.

It is also 1921 when Alice Covert Jennings arrives here from Shreveport, LA. For many years she is to provide music for St. Anthony Catholic Church. When she dies at age 70 on 8/4/51 she leaves behind sons Ralph and Stuart of Harlingen and five daughters.

A.D. Holmes who has visited the area regularly since 1910 decides to move to Harlingen and sells his Gonzales County farm in 1921. At 514 E. Jackson he erects a house across from the Central Ward School. It is so admired that he becomes a house contractor for others. He is later to build Harlingen's first apartment complex at 601 E. Jackson. In 1924 he runs for the city commission and receives the highest vote total—34. Holmes is responsible for the beautification of Fair Park by planting a garden and numerous native trees. He starts the zoo, primarily with area animals, at the park.

1922 Thomas Herkimer arrives. He is one of the first paid Harlingen firemen and then a city employee. He dies 8/5/60 at age 74 and is survived by his wife Ruby and son Thomas Jr.

Some time in this year or the next Archie R. Connell, Sr. and his wife Ethel build a modest cottage at 807 E. Jackson on its still unpaved thoroughfare. In the late 1930s he will share a shop building downtown with another craftsman. The sign on it reads A.R. Connell Tin Shop underneath which is written Claud Ward Roofing.

Coming this same year from Louise, TX is Mrs. Nellie Ward of Primera. She teaches music at the Christ Church. Dying at age 77 on 8/17/60, she leaves her husband Delward and two local sons, James Sterling and David L. When the town of Primera is incorporated in April 1955, Delward is elected its first mayor by gleaning 26 of the 32 votes cast. His son D.L. received the other six votes as a write-in candidate. Ward is re-elected without opposition in 1956, 1958, and 1960. He is to die in office on 10/1/60 at age 85.

12/4/22 Born to Charles and Grace Polhemus this date in Holdrege, Nebraska is LaDonna Grace. As a young child she will come to Harlingen where her family will have been said to have established the first ice cream factory in the RGV. Her father Charles S.

is president and manager of the Valley Ice Cream Co. which in the 1930s is located at 620-22 E. Polk. She is to marry Billie Joe Livingston. When she dies in Ft. Worth at age 82 on 4/9/05 she leaves her only daughter, Dede Durham, and six descendants.

Mrs. Nora Claudene Young from Paris, TX also arrived this year. Upon her death at age 69 on 6/6/61 this First Methodist member leaves behind her husband W.Y., daughter Norine Loomis, and sons R.O. and E.O.

Charles Matthew Dunkin, born in Kentucky in 1879, moves to Stuart Place from Cushing, KY. He is to be the father of Dial Dunkin, prominent banker, and the husband of Minnie. This First Methodist Church member is dies at 81 on 3/19/60. Dial B. "Bus" Dunkin will become president of the Harlingen National Bank, promote the Texas State Technical Institute, and be president of both the C of C and the Rotary Club. In 1971 he will be one of 20 inducted into the Harlingen Historical Hall of Fame.

Dr. Noah Albert Davidson and his wife Dorris Drury Davidson establish themselves in the community this year. Tragedy is to strike them when their five year old son N.A. (Sonny) born here 4/7/31 is to die after being scalded. They had daughters Barbara Davidson (Boyett) and Lella Joyce "Joy" Davidson (Judin). The latter born 11/24/29 will go on to be Harlingen High School valedictorian and be graduated from Baylor University, later to volunteer in many community activities in the Valley. She is to die 2/5/06 at age 76 leaving five children and her sister. Her mother died in November 1999 at age 96. Dr. Davidson is a Rotarian and served on the school board. He is to die in 1947.

12/28/22 Georgiana Dishman, Valley pioneer, dies in Harlingen.

1922 This is the year C.H. Wittenbach arrives with his family in Harlingen. In the early 1900s he had been a grocer in Chamois, MO, but in 1908 had moved his family to Electra, TX near Wichita Falls. He builds a family home at 622 W. Van Buren and then a 20-room apartment house (still standing in 2004) beside it. Later he sells it to Eva R. Carnes. When his married daughter dies here in 1922, C.H. and his wife take up the care of her five boys. C.H.'s wife Eva (b. 10/12/62) will die on 4/26/40 and be buried in the Harlingen Cemetery. C.H. after remarrying and moving to California had his second wife die there. Sons A.J. and Hugo then brought him back to Harlingen, but he returned to California where he died the mid 1950s. For many years Hugo will operate his Hugo's Cash and Carry Grocery at E. Taylor. The brick building's ground level has the and upstairs are living quarters. Later the premise will be occupied by Cox Funeral home. This same year F.D. Nance moves here from San Benito. Born 11/1/70 in Leon County, he had come to San Benito years before to become a merchant. In Harlingen he became a shoe salesman, but a dry goods store with which he was connected folded in the early 30s. Nance was appointed a justice of the peace on 1/1/33 and remained as such until his death at age 78 on 10/28/58. This Mason and member of the First Methodist Church had married Maude Grayhill in 1907. He left his sons, F.D. Jr. of Beeville and William M. of Taft.

1923 Hill Cocke comes to the Valley. He begins his Valley career first in citrus in the Mission area then he finds employment as a brick salesman for Guenter Weiske's Mission Brick Company in Madero. In 1941 he is to found the Valley Ready Mix Company which is to have the first concrete factory in the Valley. It will grow into Varmicon.

The year also sees Frederick Rietschle from Okemah, OK coming here. He becomes a real estate man. He dies 9/16/61 at age 85.

This year is when Dr. A.C. McLamore, a physician and surgeon, comes to town where he becomes a partner in McLamore and Utley. Born in Montgomery AL on 7/27/77, he was educated in Natchitoches with an MD degree. He married Alice Worsham of Atlanta, LA on 4/16/03. This Baptist is also a Mason. At their 420 E. Harrison home is daughter Mary Lou.

Coming this same year was J.V. Murphy who would first manage the Moorland Hotel, then the new Moore Hotel, later to be renamed the Madison, and also, jointly, the Plaza Hotel when it opened in 1930. He was born in Killeen, TX 9/5/82 and educated at Cumberland University. He had married Lora Landford of Holland, TX on 5/25/16. This gentleman of Irish descent was a Mason, Odd Fellow, Elk, and C of C member. In 1929 they have one son, Joseph.

1923 This is the year Mrs. Iola Passmore arrived here from Center, TX. A member of the Combes Church of Christ, she lives to 80 before dying on 5/30/61.

Jose Anacleto Rodriguez comes to Harlingen this year and takes up the trade of shoemaker. This Immaculate Heart of Mary member retires and lives at 429 Polk before his death at age 63 on 2/5/61.

Another arrival this year is Jesse Hutchinson from Dallas. This longtime VMS employee will die 5/30/60 at age 70, leaving no direct descendants.

Paul G. Greenwood, a native of Mineral Bluff, GA b. 7/30/96, arrives to take up the practice of law. He is a graduate of John Tarleton Agricultural College and UT. On 8/28/24 he marries Marion Greenleaf Paul. This Baptist serves as Rotary president and is a member of the International Order of Foresters and the Elks.

John H. Jordan comes to Harlingen in 1923. He is employed for 21 years in the city with Federal Petroleum. He then spends 15 years at the Combes waterworks system before retiring 4/28/87. This First Baptist Church, Combes member dies 4/6/91 leaving his wife, two sons and a daughter.

J.M. and Sarah Ann Longfellow come to the city this year. He becomes involved in investments. A resident of 218 E. Polk, she is to die at age 78 on 4/29/52.

John Patrick Goike comes to town in 1923 from Gainesville, TX. He will be head engineer for the Corpus Christi-based Aransas Compress Co. at its N. Commerce and Fair Park Blvd. facility. His wife Ellen Nora Matilda Henrietta Block Goike with their five children arrives in April 1923. At first they live in a company house near the compress then move to a large pink house on Harrison.

12/10/23 On the way from Baltimore to Harlingen the Adolphs stop in Victoria for mother Rose to give birth to her third child, Dorothy. Rose and Abbish Adolph already have Leo and Mildred with them. Once in Harlingen the parents, one of the earliest Jewish inhabitants in the community, open a retail clothing store. It will later be renamed the New York Store. Mr. Adolph will not live many years to see how successfully his store will evolve.

1924 Ella Arthur Purdy comes to Harlingen. Her children Arthur Daniel and Mrs. Florence Young grow up here. On 11/2/59 she dies at age 75. She was a member of St. Anthony's Catholic Church and was a graduate of the Chicago School of Music.

Coming this year was Jesus Castro. He was to be a carpenter living here for the next 38 years until his death at age 74. This resident of 221 E. Pierce and member of the

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church left his wife Felicitas V. and daughter Consuelo C. Perez.

Arriving from Oklahoma was Dr. John Cory Watkins, a graduate of the St. Louis Medical School. He is to die at age 85 on 4/30/62 leaving his widow Daisy, sons George L. of Harlingen and E.K. Watkins of Edinburg. He and his wife, a former nurse, had been married 57 years. In his 50 year practice he had delivered over 10,000 babies.

Mrs. Minnie Lee McCreight of Rangerville Road also came this year from Arkansas and practiced her faith at the Rangerville Baptist Church before dying at age 83, 3/3/61.

Thomas Read Williams was farming in the Valley this year then in 1929 began to operate the Rio Grande Pharmacy to use his University of North Carolina pharmacy degree. He was born 10/19/02 in Morristown, TN as is his wife, Jimmie Davis. This first Methodist Church member dies 9/16/60 at age 57. Their son was well-known children's dentist, Dr. Thomas Williams of Harlingen. Their daughter Patricia Williams Speer, born in Harlingen in 1929, followed her father's footsteps as a Harlingen pharmacist for many years. She married John M. Speer, Sr.

In 1924 William Henry Burk, born 2/26/89 in Burnside, KY, arrived to become a pioneer contractor. This First Baptist member is to die 4/22/60. His wife, at age 55, preceded him on 1/15/46 leaving him, a son Cecil and three daughters.

This year also Lillian A. Cole arrives with her husband the Rev. Charles L. Cole, who will soon leave her a widow. This First Methodist Church member will die at age 70 on 2/18/63 leaving three sons including Wayne Cole of Harlingen.

Archibald Frederick Hasselmier arrives in Harlingen in October 1924 from Paris TX. His wife, Alta Lee Walker Stowe Hasselmier, will come the following May with three children from her previous marriage and four from her current one. They build a house at Madison and 13th Streets, later buying two city lots for \$50 each and then building a brick house on each. He then rents a 15-acre ranch, raises dairy cattle, and sells the milk to Hygeia. He starts a plumbing business with his son Eddie and stepson, Carl Stowe. He does well and buys more land on West Wilson Road. He is said by descendents to have installed the first indoor plumbing in Harlingen. His shop was on Madison Street. He died in 1954 and his wife in 1974.

12/24 is the month that Charles and Jennie Chilton come from the Missouri Ozarks upon an invitation from the Stuart Land Co. They purchase land and return in 12/24. He raises citrus and vegetables, but they go back to Missouri in 1927. Their grown children remain however. Carl and Mildred teach school in Harlingen in 1927 and daughter Pauline in Mission. Mildred will marry George Potts. Carl, whose first wife dies, will marry McAllen school teacher Eula Kell in 1929. Pauline marries Herbert Chiswell. It is Carl Jr. who will in 1951 associate with Bill Long to form the Harlingen accounting firm of Long, Chilton, Payne and Hardin.

It is the year 1924 that Carlos Z. Gracia, Sr. is born in Brownsville, TX to Ezequiel and Victoria (Veronica?) Zamora Gracia, but his family soon moves to Harlingen. In WWII Carlos is to serve with the 44th Coast Artillery Battalion. He will see action in the Pacific Theater including Iwo Jima. For his service accomplishments he is awarded the WWII Victory Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two Bronze Stars and the Good Conduct Medal. Returning to civilian life he becomes a member of the Harlingen Police Force and over a 33-year period rises in rank from Patrolman to Sergeant, and retiring as Detective. He then joins the Cameron County Sheriff Dept as a Lt. and later

replaces I.J. Galvan upon the latter's death. He then is elected to the Pct. 7 position. A lifelong member of American Legion Post #205 and VFW Post # 2410, he is also the co-founder of Harlingen Crimestoppers. This Queen of Peace Catholic Church member is to die 1/11/05 leaving behind his wife of 37 years, Antioneta Astorino Gracia, four sons and two daughters as well as his former wife Ninfa Cano Salinas.

In 1925 Emery Polk Hornaday II comes to Harlingen. This Valley native was born near Clarksville, TX 12/9/88. He attended UT, North Texas Normal College, and the University of Montpellier France. In the years 1906-1911 he was a school teacher and principal. His WWI service was two years, four months in the army. He married Lucille Caswell 9/1/23. A partner of Hornaday and Mayfield in 1928, he is Cameron County representative in the state legislature as well as president of the Lions Club, American Legion member, and in the Optimist Club. In 1933 he is city attorney. He maintains a law practice until January 1981. This First Christian Church member is to die 7/12/81 at age 92 leaving his second wife, Eustolia.

Mac Upton Caul, born in Austin 5/27/00, moves his cotton brokerage business from San Benito to Harlingen. He had operated there after moving to the Valley in 1925. He continues this operation until 1935 when he purchases the Finwood Heights Subdivision off 1st street, an area southwest of the present Coakley Junior High School, and develops it along with his brother. After building houses there they sell out to Bob Baker. Mac marries Eustacia (Sunshine) Hill, the youngest child of Lon C. Hill. In the 1960s she is a Harlingen school teacher. She is very active with YWCA matters and the board of the RGV Museum as well as preservation concerns. In 1941 Mr. Caul becomes an oil and gasoline distributor and continues this occupation until his death (3/16/61) by a stroke at age 60. This 32nd Degree Mason is also a member of the First Presbyterian Church. He was born in Austin on 5/27/00. They have one daughter Eustacia (Stacie), who in 1961 was a Harlingen school teacher.

7/4/25 Mrs. Ethel Downing, who is named Valley Baptist Hospital superintendent, arrives. Five years ago she was graduated from the Christian Church Hospital in Kansas City.

9/25 Max and Clara Van Hoy come to Harlingen. He will be the brick foreman during the erection of the Baxter Building and also work on the erection of the First Baptist Church in 1927.

1926 Frank E. Davis arrives from Kansas City, MO. He becomes a pioneer in the gift fruit business and is president of Pittman and Davis Shippers. He serves as president of the school board 1929-42, is Rotary president for a spell, and on the Ration Board in WWII. This First Presbyterian member dies 10/14/62 leaving his widow, Katherine, and two sons, Edward (Ned) C. and Richard D. of Harlingen and others elsewhere.

This same year Tom C. Johnson, a barber, arrives from Eldorado, AR. This Louisiana native born 10/17/86 and Calvary Baptist member dies 10/17/62 leaving son Thomas Baker.

Also coming this year is Ira Robertson, who is to die 10/22/62 in a boating accident in Port Mansfield. He had been a building contractor and a member of the Baptist Church and Elks. Outside of his wife Ruby he leaves no relatives here.



Having lived in the Valley from this year Jesse Jerome Lily is to become engineer for the Harlingen water plant. This Church of Christ member dies 12/22/62 at age 57 leaving his widow Anna Mae, and children elsewhere.

Dr. George Whitney Diehl arrives this year to practice medicine and does so until 1958. From Eldora, Iowa he attended Grinnell College, the U. of Wyoming, and the U. of Iowa. He was a WWI veteran. Upon his death at age 64 on 1/9/62 this Arroyo Drive resident left his wife Blanch F. and son Dr. George Diehl, a dentist. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, a Shriner and an Elk.

1926 Originally from Smithton, MO, it is the railroad which brings Ernest Holbert Haire to Harlingen. Retired at 803 1st Street, he is to die at age 78 on 2/13/61.

DuVal West, Jr. is the son of the distinguished Texas and judge, who has so much history attached to him, and Isabelle C. West. Junior was born in San Antonio 11/12/93. He has a UT degree. He married Ruth Bramlette in 11/19/17. In WWI he rose to the rank of captain in the field artillery, serving 26 months all told, 17 of which were overseas. In Harlingen he is an attorney.

Arriving from Fort Worth via Lubbock is W. Edison Bush, who is to establish the Bush Wholesale Supply Plumbing Co. His family will follow in 1927. His warehouse built about this year on North C Street will be destroyed by the 1933 hurricane. Another one will be built in 1939 at Jackson and J streets. Daughter Mary Annice will enjoy their new 1927 house on the 1200 block of Van Buren.

Pomp Eddie Jones is to come this year. He will enter the laboratory business. When he dies at 82 on 9/21/62 he leaves behind his widow Clara, daughters Mabel Jones and Mrs. Helen Cooper, sons Horace and Maxwell.

Abraham John is here this year. Born 10/4/1880 in Furzal, Lebanon, he came at age 16 to Nebraska. He was involved in real estate and the land business as well as being associated with J.C. Penney and Co. This St. Anthony's Church member was also a Knight of Columbus and an Elk. Dying 2/26/63 at age 82 he leaves two daughters and four sons.

Another Valley arrival this year is Harley W. Swanson born 3/21/23 in Clara City, MN. Swanson will attend HHS then Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos before serving in the Army Air Corps. Returning here this St. John Lutheran (San Benito) member will work many years for the postal service. Dying at age 77 he will leave behind his wife of 49 years Yvonne Thompson Swanson, two daughters and one son. Having come to San Benito in 1917, William A. and Elizabeth Hoelscher Burger come to Harlingen in 1926. They were married in Westfalia and will celebrate their 50th anniversary 10/18/53. He is a retired barber and their children are F.E. Burger of San Benito, Mrs. A.H. Pulliam, Mrs. L.M. Smith and James Burger, all of Harlingen and a son and daughter elsewhere.

Another new family to Harlingen this year is that of Harry D. and Louise Hays Pike Yates with children Betty Pike Yates, C. David, and Thomas Leon Yates. They came from Indian Creek near Monroe City, Missouri, where son Tom was born. Betty Pike's father was Oscar Pike, who died December 31, 1918 of diabetes when she was 11 months old, and her mother Louise Hays Pike re-married Harry Yates. Their little girl, Mary Maxine, wasn't born until 1928 and died of diptheria in 1930. Harry, Louise and Mary are buried in the Harlingen City Cemetery. Later in life daughter Betty would go on to marry Finis E. Easterling, the automobile dealer.

Mr. Yates will become a long-time employee of the post office retiring in the mid-1950s. Son Thomas is to attend grade school at Immaculate Heart then be graduated from Harlingen High School. At age 18 he joins the WWII war effort and serves in Europe with the 766th Bomb Squadron. Upon his return he receives a double degree in math and science from Southwest Texas Teachers College in San Marcos. He is to marry Gene Cutshall in the church the Yates family helped to found, St. Anthony's Church, 3/24/51. He was employed as general manager for Easterling Motors both in Brownsville and Harlingen before assuming the position of algebra teacher at HHS. He served as a teacher for 23 years, retiring in 1989. An avid golfer, he also coached the high school team for several years. Dying at age 81 on 4/10/06, he leaves behind his wife, four daughters and three sons.

This year also Lawrence J. and Marie Powers come to Harlingen where he will work as a salesman for Bruington and Wilcox, realtors located in the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel. Their children are to be Charles R. "Charlie " Powers, Mary Margaret, Pat L., and James Michael "Mike" Powers, the latter who will distinguish himself. He was born on 6/12/25 in Jerseyville, IL. Graduating from HHS in 1942 he commenced attending Texas A&M College before serving in the Army Air Corps during WWII. He then attended UT, Austin before returning to Harlingen to work with his father and brother in Powers Insurance and Real Estate until 1957 when he joined the Harlingen State Bank, later to become the Harlingen National Bank. He served with this bank for 43 years, 17 as president. He served the community on the Harlingen Airport Board, Economic Development Commission, Civil Service Commission, C of C, Salvation Army Advisory Board, Rotary Club (for 52 years), and as a life-long member of St. Anthony's Church on its Financial Committee. Dying on 9/6/06 at age 81 he had survived his first wife, Olive "Leigh" and left behind his second wife, Charlotte Prenzier Guild Powers, son Greg M. Powers, his wife and grandchildren together with his brother Pat.

In 1926 coming from Clanton, Alabama to Harlingen with his parents was ten or eleven year old Finis E. Easterling. He was born 10/16/15. He later was to own the Buick-Pontiac dealership in Harlingen and numerous other agencies in South Texas. On the City Commission he served two terms and acted as mayor pro tem. He dies prematurely of cancer at age 45 on 12/31/60.

1927 Gerald W. and Verna McKenna arrive this year. He will be involved with insurance and loans at the Valley State Bank and later with the LRGV Historical Society. Verna Jackson McKenna becomes a library board member in 1928, then is librarian from September 1939 until April 1971 but is on leave of absence from 1943 to 2/46 while she is librarian at the Harlingen Army Air Field. Born 8/11/90 in Bastrop County, she was graduated from the College of Industrial Arts in Denton in 1911. Early she taught school, had two daughters, and was deeply involved in civil affairs. As a preservationist, historian, writer, and leader she amassed numerous honors for her many achievements and services to the community. She died at age 85 in Gadsden, AL on 5/24/76 having left Harlingen four years earlier.

Also arriving this year is John Edward Boyd. He was born in Dallas on 10/31/84. This St Anthony's Church member was a long time employee of the William Cameron Co., contractors, and retired in 1950. When he dies at age 77 on 1/1/62, he leaves behind one son, Andy Boyd.

Here this year also is John C. Rodgers born in Ringgold, La on 8/31/79. He came here from Gibson, LA and worked at Rollins Service and Machine Shop. This First Methodist and resident of 409 E. Washington is to die at age 83 on 3/6/62. He left behind his wife Georgia, son Harold in Mercedes and son J.C. Rodgers, Jr. in Harlingen and two daughters, Mrs. Dorothy Miley of Harlingen, Billie Bullard of San Benito and others elsewhere.

Charles Howard Lang, who is to work for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, arrives this year. He is to die here at age 66 on 7/7/59.

1927 Gerhard Henry Raymond comes to Harlingen after being a funeral director in Pearl, TX. He operates a hardware store here from 1927 to 1936, then works for San Antonio Machine and Supply, retiring in 1954. He is a member of Grace Lutheran English Church. At age 77 he dies on 7/29/60 leaving his wife and two daughters, Mrs. Sam Walters and Mrs. James Mayer.

Barney W. Meredith, born 5/12/94 in La Grange, KY, comes here from Louisville in 1927. He had served in the Great War and here became a representative for the Belnap Hardware Co. He passes 5/24/61 at age 67.

Ben T. Ezzell was born 11/12/87 in Fannin County, TX and came here in 1927. Upon his death on 6/18/61 at age 83 this First Christian Church parishioner leaves a daughter, Mrs James (Frances) L. McMilland who is a prominent dance instructor in the community, and a son Ben Q. Ezzell.

In 1927 after coming this year from Flagstaff, AZ, Herbert R. Scurlock, Sr. starts a grocery store in the front room of his Gumwood Street, McAllen home and in 1933 moves the business to the 500 block of N. Main. He will eventually have stores across the Valley including the Coronado Shopping Village in Harlingen. His is one of the first in Texas to originate cash and carry operations for retail food. He passes away at age 69 on 11/15/62.

Mrs. Susie B. Lackland comes in 1927 to live in Harlingen. She leaves her mark on the community as a member of the Harlingen Garden Club, Women's Club, and founder of the Bougainvillea Trail in the Valley. When she dies 2/4/ 61 she leaves no local survivors.

Here since this year is Alberto R. Rodriguez, who will become a plumber by trade, and die at age 61, 9/6/60.

Walter Leonard Lancaster came this year from Osage, Iowa and later worked at the CPL Service Center. This 61 year old First Methodist member dies 7/3/61.

It is in 1927 that thirty year old John A. Crockett, his wife Pat, daughter Eleanor, and his son Richard move to Harlingen from Bryan, TX. This UT and Tulane Medical School graduate becomes the first eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist in the city. He had served in the Great War where he was seriously wounded in the Battle of the Argonne Forest. In Harlingen he studied the effects of sunlight on the body and published papers on this and other subjects. An active Rotarian he was its secretary in 1929, its president in 1930, and District 47 governor in 1931. He also served on the school board for a number of years. Due to his wife's allergies they moved to Austin in 1940.

It is this same year that Bonnye Ruth Whitworth , born 11/17/14, comes to Harlingen with her sisters Dorothy and Betty Jean and her parents Lee and Ruby Whitworth. The latter will work as attendants at the Davis Tourist Camp and reside at 103 E. Tyler. Bonnye is graduated from HHS in 1932 and Mary Hardin Baylor University in 1937. She

then embarks on a 40-year career as an American History teacher in the Harlingen Schools and Southmost University in Brownsville. This First Baptist Church member, who is to die on 11/10/05 at age 90, is survived by her sister Betty Jean Thompson and family.

It was in 1928 after her husband's death, that long-lived Mrs. Emily Jordan came to be with her daughter Mrs. Carl Walker. On 11/4/60 she would celebrate her 100th birthday. Sid Murray is here and is both band director and dealer at Sid's Harmony Shop. He was born in Galveston on 12/23/87 and educated in Victoria. He married Lottie Bermack on 2/6/07. Sid is a member of the Elks and Kiwanis and is a volunteer fireman.

It is 1928 when Arthur D. Purdy comes to Harlingen as a sophomore in high school. He goes on to attend UT and do graduate work at SMU. Entering the postal service in the 1930s, he was appointed assistant Harlingen postmaster in 1945 and was later promoted to post master. He organized the Valley Postal Credit Union and the Harlingen Area Teachers Credit Union. He was president of the Rio Grande Valley Civic Music Association which evolved into the Harlingen Community Concert Association. He was instrumental in the formation of Harlingen Little Theater group and in 1975 the Country Playhouse. He served as president of the Girl Scout Council and the Community Chest (predecessor to United Way), was a Lions and First Presbyterian Church member, and was in the HOSTS program for 17 years. He died at age 86 on 6/12/95 leaving behind a tremendous legacy of community service. He was to marry Edna Mae Lightfoot in 1933. She was born 8/10/10 in Fort Worth, TX and had moved to Harlingen with her parents Frank and Alice as a teenager. She was a HHS graduate who later worked at the Harlingen Army Airfield, Rainbo Bakery and the Flynn Insurance Co. This Covenant Presbyterian Church member was married for 62 years, a member of the Contemporary Study Club, and contributor to many community activities. Dying on 4/23/05, this 94 year old left behind daughters Carol Jean Purdy Flynn and Barbara Ann Purdy.

1928 Van B. Alexander arrives here and becomes the owner of the Rio Grande Tile Co., 1928-1957. Born 8/16/82 in Waco, this 70 year old Mason dies 12/29/62 leaving his wife Lila and no offspring.

Coming around 1928, Lloyd H. Thompson is president of the First National Bank by 1929. He was born in Jacksonville, IL on 2/25/80 and educated at Winfield High School. He married Orpha M. Tucker of Lamont, OK on 6/6/06. He is the former president of the C of C and a Methodist Church member as well as a Mason, Shriner, Rotarian, and Elk. Their summer home is Boulder, CO. Residing with them at 201E. Taylor are their children Carrol Lee, Lois Eileen, Phillip A., and Laile H. Mrs. Thompson is active in the Red Cross and Harlingen Study Club.

This year Floyd Smith is managing the Smith Tailor Shop. He is a native of Manny, LA having been born there 12/5/96. Educated in public schools, he married Elaine Hall of St. Augustine County, TX on 4/8/18 after serving in the Motor Transport Corps in WWI. In the Valley now for eight years, he was fire chief in Harlingen for five years. At home are Mr. Smith's mother, Mrs. H.B. Smith, and daughter Margaret Ann. Elaine Smith is active in the Red Cross, Study Club, and the Harlingen Music Club.

New to the city this year is Frank Stacey. Born in Austin on 7/24/97, he is a UT graduate who serves eight months as a second lieutenant in France in WWI. Here this Methodist Church member and Rotarian manages the City Storage Garage, Inc.

It is 1928 that Mrs Helen Porter Pile comes to the city. She is a longtime teacher at Sam Houston. This First Presbyterian who lived at 302 E. Polk is to die 5/14/50.

This same year Lorimer Brown, an attorney, and his wife Beatrice H. Brown come to Harlingen. She is a Pittsburg, PA native. She is to die 7/10/73 at age 68. This First Baptist Church member was in the Cameron County Bar Auxiliary, worked with the Red Cross during WWII and was head of the VBH nurses aids in this same period. She left behind her husband and two sons.

7/6/28 J.T. Floore arrives to take up the position of permanent secretary of the Valley Mid-Winter Fair Association.

1929 Tell Brown comes to town where he will reside until his death on 5/12/60. He is a long time employee of the Harlingen Compress Co. He leaves no descendents.

Nola Weaver Morris came this year with her husband Dr. Franklin Morris, who was to die in 1958. She lived to age 73, dying on 1/20/62. Of their seven children, left behind here were, Rachel Pletcher, the wife of George Pletcher Jr. and Louie G. Morris. Louie, married to Gladys L. in about 1935, began his work career with Star Tire Service but soon began with Hygeia Milk Products Co. and rose to salesman. In the mid 40s he was with sales at Boggus Motors then spent most of his work career as a food and produce salesman and distributor. Finally just before retirement in 1968 he became a route supervisor for San Benito's Magee Dairy.

Coming that same year was Harvey E. (Pop) Jones. He owns a café. At age 67 he passes on 10/2/60 leaving a son Dwight here.

The Gallahers, George and Blanch Tudor, also move here this year. He had been graduated from the U. of Iowa in 1925, then went on to medical school in Arkansas while his wife supported them as a dietician in a veteran's hospital. Once here he became a partner with Dr. Noah Davison. Their offices were on the 10th floor of the Baxter Building. A year later he opened his own practice with an office on the 7th floor, staying there until his death in 1971. He became a silent partner with Dan Palmer in the Harlingen Motors Dodge and Plymouth Agency at 424 W. Harrison until 1958. This was the old Wroten Motors. He also owned farmland and a drive-in movie complex on South 77 Sunshine Strip. Their daughter is Julie Gallaher Uhlhorn, wife of Tock Uhlhorn, a Tennessean and farmer who is to die here 11/20/1980. Julie, born in Harlingen in 1930, will be graduated from HHS at age 16 in 1947 and go on to Northwestern University, graduating in 1951. After her marriage in 12/52 she became very active in community activities. These included being on the board of the Texas State Bank, Girl Scout Council Harlingen Chamber of Commerce, Gladys Porter Zoo, Algodon, Chapter CW of P.E.O., and being a founder of the Harlingen Historical Preservation Society. As a St. Alban's Episcopal Church member from 1960 she served as a Sunday schoolteacher and on many committees. She was to die 10/25/08 at age 78, leaving behind a son, two daughters, and five grandchildren.

Earle Freeman Rumbo comes to the Valley in 1929 to join his brother-in-law Clyde Boothe in selling Reliable Business Safes. He had grown up and gone to school in Ennis, marrying Edna Boothe in 1921. Their son Robert was born in 1924. In 1932 Earle is to start a 45-year career with the Etna Life Insurance Co. A First Methodist Church member he is also a Mason, Shriner, and Rotarian. In 1940 the Rumbos will complete their house at 621 E. Filmore. He is to die 11/28/77 and she at age 84 in 1985.

Cecil Carruth arrives this year. His older brother Paul will follow about four years later. Carruth in 1930 was the bookkeeper for the Grant Lumber Co. in Harlingen and a year later had worked up to manager. By 1937 Carruth's business was general insurance and loans. By 1939 he was into the partnership of Carruth and Johnson Insurance, then with his brother Paul, and still later with Grant Klopenstein as Carruth-Klopenstein, real estate and insurance. Cecil, called Happy by his friends, is somewhat of a genius or, at minimum, his mile-a-minute mind is open to new ideas. He conceives the idea of commencing a frozen juice concentrate plant in Harlingen. This will be in the cold storage plant which he purchased from CPL in 1946 and renamed Harlingen Cold Storage. He went to Florida and learned what would be required, including over \$1 million of stainless steel piping. He and partners, including Paul, then convert the large plant at 804 North Commerce in the late 1940s. Misfortune befell them when a severe freeze decimated the Valley's 1949 citrus crop. His Texas Frozen Food Corp., for which he was president and J.E. Barr executive vice president, then sought alternatives in watermelon and pineapple concentrates and even looked into freeze-dried foods. When Paul went on with others to found Tropical Savings and Loan, Cecil sought to utilize the plant by leasing it to shrimp and other packers. Squirt brand soda pop with its grapefruit-citrus flavor was even bottled there for a time. When he died at age 82 10/4/85 the property was willed to the Rio Grande Children's Home in Mission.

1929-38 Arthur Bundy will operate a Harlingen photo studio. He will document graduates, social events, and business portraits among other things. Upon retirement he moved to Indiana but returns in 1945. At his death 1/7/62 he leaves behind his wife Gertrude and daughter Mrs. Charles Holbrook of Harlingen.

## **Education**

1920 The school enrollment at the Central Ward School and the West Ward (Mexican) School is 284 pupils as the school year starts. The children of new arrivals will soon push it to 425, 90 of whom are high school students. The Central Ward School has eight real classrooms four improvised ones and two in a new framed addition constructed on the northeast side. The West Ward School has four classrooms. The student growth necessitates the successful passage of a \$30,000 bond issue in addition to the \$40,000 for the new high school.

It is 1920 that sees the city hire its first football coach, D.M. Denton.

In the 1920s Harlingen segregates its Mexican surnamed school children through the 4-5th grades.

Superintendent of Schools at this time is J. T. Foster until Paul Phipps arrives in the fall. At this time the city's population is 1,784, the school enrollment is 450 taught by 16 teachers of whom five hold degrees. The next spring sees the school graduate seven boys and nine girls.

When early records of high school graduate were lost in the 1933 Hurricane, Eunice Simmons Madeley (Mrs. Neil Madeley Sr.) and other early graduates took it upon themselves about 1974 to reconstruct the names of individuals. Since the number is small it is accounted for below:

1914 Roberta Chaudoin, later Mrs. Renus Snavelly

- Gladys Snavely, later Mrs. E. M. Bowen  
Murl Snavely, later Mrs. Pletcher  
Fred Osborne
- 1915 Doris Snavely, later Mrs. Paul Earl Phipps  
Ophelia Harrington, later Mrs. Morris Chaudoin  
Estelle Smith  
Moody Dorough  
Mary Lou Brown  
Irenus Snavely, who would marry Roberta Chaudoin
- 1916 Vera Thompson  
Roy Decker  
Emmett Anglin  
Arethusa Brown
- 1917 Pauline Snavely  
Eunice Simmons, later Mrs. Neil Madeley Sr.  
Frances Scarborough  
Roland Ogan  
(Van) Buren Sidener
- 1918 Mattie James, later Mrs. Hough  
Willis Weaver
- 1919 Roscoe Witt  
Joe Chaudoin, who was to marry Dallas Hartin  
Mabel Waters  
Opal Snavely  
Corinne Verser  
Mildred Gustafson  
Jamie Stockton  
Gladys Poteet  
Gladys Smith  
Lois Ogan, later Mrs. Williams
- 1920 Phillip Hardage Cooper  
Lafayette Ferris Weaver  
Martha Clarketta Griffith  
Edgar S. Place Jr.  
Dorothy Louise Place  
Eustacia (Sunshine) Dabney Hill, later Mrs. M. Caul  
Mertie Elizabeth Hill  
Margaret Edna Cook  
Bessie Virginia Oler  
Betsy Bass

11/30/20 The *Harlingen Star* initiates a school column called *El Lasso*. Its high school editor-in-chief is William Elwing. His senior class with 15 current students is the largest to-date.

1921 Luz Ramirez, later to be Mrs. Bennie Leal of San Benito, is the first student of Mexican origin to be graduated from Harlingen High School. In 1922 Alfred Lozano, later to be Doctor Lozano, is the first Hispanic boy to be graduated.

In this year also a business survey indicates that there was already a business school operating here.

4/9/21 A \$30,000 school bond issue is voted in. It will supplement the earlier \$40,000 issue and allow the construction of a high school.

6/19/21 A \$50,000 bond issue is voted by Stuart Place residents to construct a schoolhouse. It will be paid for by a 75 cent per \$100 property valuation tax increase according to Cameron County School Superintendent P.D. Kennamer. Bob and O.E. Stuart donate 10 acres of land for its site. The school is scheduled to be completed by January 1, 1922. Mrs. Hugh Fitzgerald is president of the board and Mrs. R. D. Corn secretary. The former is one of the few women in the state to hold such a position. B.A. Elwing and Roy Mulhausen, architects of San Benito and Harlingen, have submitted plans for a modern building to serve the 185 scholars presently enrolled in the district. The same architects have designed the \$50,000 new Harlingen High School. The 216' x 145' structure will have two wings each holding eight classrooms and be constructed by W.T.Liston and Son.

1921-22 In this school year 534 students are enrolled. This may rise to 816 over time. The system has 21 teachers.

12/12/21 The School Board of Trustees appropriates \$60,000 for construction of a new senior high school. Its ornate twin-towered building is erected on the west side of the double block extending from 6th to 8th Street and between Polk and Tyler. It costs \$45,452.50. Construction begins in the spring of 1922. Four years later on the east side of the two block strip the main building is constructed for use as a junior high school. In the Hurricane of 1933 the first building sustains such serious structural damage that it has to be torn down. A gymnasium-auditorium is then built in the middle of the block. By 1937, the surviving structure called the Travis Junior High School or simply the Travis School operates at this place until 1949 when a new junior high school is constructed on 13th and Madison on land donated by the Minnie Gay family. The former junior high school, now turned into the Travis Elementary School, will be demolished along with the gymnasium when a new Travis Elementary School is build on the site but nearer 6th Street in the late 1970s.

4/6/23 A contract for the \$40,000 Stuart Place School building is awarded R. E. Ewing. June 1923 Seven boys and 13 girls are the first to be graduated from the Central Ward School after 11 years of instruction. Teacher Frank Brunneman has taught Richard Stout, Kenneth Macy, Raymond Rodgers, Frank Houghton, Margaret Thomason, Lucille Bobo, Roe Davenport, Velda Goldammer, Essie McLeod, Vera Letzerich, Maureen Elmore, Velma Baize, Mayme Anglin, Mary Jennings, and Gladys Word among others. There are now 140 high school students and the total number of students has jumped to 1,100. The "High School Buzz" a monthly student newspaper is now being published.

1923 The Stuart Place School is dedicated. On the stone monument commemorating it are inscribed the names of the school board. They are: O.E. Stuart, president, J.J. Garrett, vice-president, Mrs. Hugh Fitzgerald, Secretary, W.H. Maupin, I.B. Corns, and H.C.



West. A year later with the first graduated class comes the school's first edition of its annual, "Hoja de Palma". The school building will become the gathering place for the rural residents of the area and even be used for church activities. By 1928 the school will be fully accredited.

The Harlingen High School Cardinal football team plays its first full seasonal schedule. Playing teams from seven Valley cities it compiles a record of one win, four losses, and two ties.

3/5/25 On this date it is announced that a bond issue for \$100,000 for new school construction will be voted on 4/4. At month end, Supt. Phipps, who has been here four years, is retained. The bond issue passes. Plans are to add an auditorium to the high school (blk. 45), additions to the West Ward (Mexican) School (blk.109), and repair the grade school (blk.50). Total expenditures will range from \$60,000 to \$65,000. By July a \$43,000 contract was let to H. J. Hanson and Son, Brownsville for new junior high school building (decades later referred to as the "old Travis") to be erected next to the senior high school on 6th. The cost of a 900-seat high school auditorium is put at \$21,000 with R. E. Ewing its contractor. W.T. Liston received the \$10,000 contract to add four classrooms, two on each side of the front of the West Ward School on E Street. This would double its student capacity to accommodate its wholly Hispanic student body. By 1937 a larger facility is built at adjacent 501-2 S. F Street and named the Alamo School. In 1970 the school is closed but not demolished until 1975. In the 1987-88 school year Alamo Junior High School is to open at the present site of the Harlingen High School-South campus.

In 1925, newly elected to the school board of trustees are John Sanders and A.E. McLendon taking the places of John B. James and C.A. Bobo who do not choose to run again. Holdovers are president, B.H. Brindley, A.A. Kimmel, Paul Hill, L.M. Chaudoin, R. B. Nunally, with R. B. Hamilton, secretary. Residing in a large bungalow at 313 E. Monroe, John F. Sander's family includes John Jr., Joe G., and Bennie Ray. Joe G., a band member in 1931-32 along with brother Bennie, will distinguish himself at H.H.S. by being named All-District guard in 1935 and being elected president of the "Hy-Y" Club (1936).

5/10/25 The largest graduating high school class ever consists of 34 students.

9/25 G.W. Moothart, president, of Harlingen Business College, opens the school after obtaining a three year lease for space in the A.J. Wittenbach Building. He has operated a similar school in Brownsville.

1926 This is the year Lucy A. Phillips Gough started teaching in the Harlingen School District and which she would continue to do so for 26 years. Her specialty was 7th and 8th grade language arts. A native of Sealy, Texas from which school she was graduated in 1903, she then attended the Texas Normal School in the first year it was open. She taught eight years elsewhere before coming to Harlingen. This First Baptist Church member was an originator of the Fine Arts Club in Harlingen where she continued to live for 31 years after retirement. She was also a supporter of the Valley Baptist Academy and the library. In the 1980s she moved to Sealy where on 9/6/92 she celebrated her 107th birthday.

9/10/26 With a projected increase of 204 students five new teachers are hired. The new junior high school at Polk and 7th is set to open. It will be used as such until 1949.

10/8/26 At a PTA meeting Supt. Butler of the Stuart Place School notes that the addition of four more credits this school year will bring the total to 17 ½ or 18.

10/26 E.H. and Mabel Briggs and A.W. and M.B. Coleman donate land for the construction of a public school to be known as Briggs-Coleman School for the Dishman School District No. 15 of Cameron County. In the late 1940s it would fall under the Rio Hondo School District. It operates until 1967 and is abandoned. The Country Playhouse commences using its auditorium in 1979. In this year Bob Briggs, a descendent of one of the land donors seeks to reclaim the land under its original grant stipulations. This same year construction begins on two wings and an auditorium for the Wilson School, Primera.

The Cardinal football team compiles an excellent record this season with nine victories against Valley team but loses its final game, 13 to 6, to Robstown.

In 1926 Combes voted to go into the Harlingen School District and the original section of a school was constructed with the promise of additional rooms to be built. James "Uncle Jim" Dishman donated money and the 300' by 600' site for the school and presented it a \$1,000 gift for books. Despite his reluctance, the school was named in his honor. By 1928 an extension had been constructed and dedicated by Thomas S. Pickens, Superintendent of Instruction of Harlingen Schools. A new elementary school was completed in 1950. When, on 1/27/64, its new wing became operable, John H. Morgan, superintendent HISD gave the dedication speech.

1/11/27 School student enrollment is 1,475 or 325 greater than the previous school year. An aerial photograph of Harlingen taken 9/11/27 shows the two wings that have been added to the Mexican School. It will continue to be added to on its north side and even have a wooden classroom erected alongside.

9/23/27 The Briggs-Coleman School, on what is later to be north FM 507, opens its school year in a new building. Its cornerstone lists V.T. Turner as school board president, L.H. ...nic, secretary, C.T. Johnson, trustee, Ethel B. Marshall, trustee, and P. Kennamer, county superintendent. Prof. C.O. Slaughter is principal, Miss Jewel Hudson teacher of the elementary grades and Miss Mildred Hudson, the primary grades. In the 1970s after the school has closed the Country Playhouse will use the building to host amateur theatrical productions.

8/24/27 The Valley Business College (School) is in business at 1st and Jackson across from the Rialto. By December the Draughns Practical Business College is operating in the 9th floor of the new Baxter Building.

12/30 Bids are advertised for 1/20/28 for two grade schools at approximately \$50,000 each. They will feature eight classrooms, a cafeteria, and be fireproof. 2,100 students are expected the next school year.

1928 The Lozano Building's upper floor is remodeled by Dr. Alfredo Lozano to convert it into a Harlingen business college, but this apparently did not occur until 1941.

The city brags that six schools have been completed with a \$500,000 investment, and \$400,000 of bonds voted for a new high school and two others. School attendance is 2,564.

This same year the South Ward School at 306 W. Lincoln is erected. It is later renamed the James Bowie Elementary School. Its unique colorful cast-concrete frieze by Luiz Lopez Sanchez provides it the nickname, La Escuela de la Vibores (the school of snakes.) The façade blends Mexican and native-American motifs. At this time at 700 E. Austin the North Ward School, later to be called Austin Elementary, is built with designs by the Meriwether and Sauers Company. The combined cost for both is \$93, 258.50. Also started this year are portions of the Dishman School. In 1951 a south section will be added to Austin and in 1963 its cafeteria.

After working in numerous areas in Texas, Lillian Weems Baldrige returns to Harlingen and resumes a teaching career here spanning the years 1928 through the 1950s. She had attended four colleges earning a B.A. in 1941 and an M.A. in 1951. In 1958 she is named the Teacher of the Year. She will contribute articles to the *Brownsville News*, *Brownsville Herald*, and *Valley Morning Star*, primarily on history subjects. This daughter of the early Harlingen pioneer was a founder of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Historical Society. An Episcopalian born 1/10/1885, she was to die at age 84 on 8/2/69.

It is in 1928 that the students and faculty of HHS begin publication of the *Cardinal Clarion*. It retains this name from 1928 through 1931. On the staff Miss Roma Clift is the sponsor. Bob Tait is editor-in-chief; Sue Vaughn Aycok, assistant editor; Ralph Kell, business manager; Irene Goike, ad manager; Orville Jarrett and Corbet Waters, sports, and Emogene Oler, society.

7/24/28 For the token amount of \$1 James Henry Dishman sells five acres of land to the HISD trustees in order for a school to be built in Combes. The trustees are O. N. Joyner, Miller Harwood, J. R. Grimes, H. J. Gostzke, A. E. McClendon, William Watterman and Frank Brunneman. Several weeks earlier the school district boundaries were extended 900 acres to include Combes and a few other areas. R. B. Hamilton, board secretary, indicates the new Combes School will cost \$20,000 to construct.

9/11/28 Schools are to open this date with an enrollment of 2,200 expected and this to rise to 2,600 later. Teachers in the system number 70. [This average to 31.4 students per teacher.]

12/4/28 The Harlingen High School football team wins the Valley Championship with nine victories and no defeats. It didn't allow a single touchdown by a pass or running play all season.

1929 This year Dr. L.L. Wheeler is here along with his wife Verda. He will become principal at Stuart Place where his wife will teach Spanish for 12 years. For a time he is principal at the Sam Houston School. They depart Harlingen in 1941. She passes away in New York in January 1963.

1/2/29 2,100 children are in school as of this mid-school year date. From 1920-21 when the school population was 816, the system gained only 305 to 1924-25 then 238 were added in 1925-26 bringing the 1926-27 start total to 1,475. This grew to 1,697 by January and 1,983 by April. The escalating growth indicates the dynamic development of the city in this period.

1/8/29 Dewitt and Washburn, Dallas are to be the architects for the new \$270,000 high school expected to be completed by January 1930. Its appearance will be Spanish Gothic. W. A. Velton of Brownsville is the eventual contractor.

2/14/29 W.L. Lehman, proprietor of the Valley Business College, dies at age 41. He leaves his wife and three small children.

4/29 Carl S. Chilton is the principal of the Central Ward Grammar School. Among the teachers are Miss Mattie Pace who teaches first grade and her sister Mrs. Ginney who teaches an elementary grade.

6/17/29 Large ads are carried urging residents to approve a supplemental bond issue of \$100,000 in order to finance the \$52,000 shortfall for the construction of the new high school but also \$20,000 for additions to the West Ward School, the same amount to pay off Comb School notes, and retire other indebtedness. The issue is to carry 278 to 217.

## **Religious**

11/20 Troy E. Wallace, Sr. of San Benito organizes a three-week tent campaign for the Church of Christ. The site is at the corner of 2nd and Jackson where Day's Rexall Drug Store will one day be located. By 2/21 Wallace comes once a month to preach in Harlingen. Later the members will meet in the Christian Church building at 4th and Jackson and then in the Central Ward School. The first elders are J.P. Beck, R.E. Ewing, Jr., J.R. Grimes, and Claud Haugh, and R.E. Ewing. Deacons are W. T. Davis and D.C. Beck. Other families and individuals are: Sparman, Ira T. Baize, Murphy, D.C. Moore, Lee Moore, Holland (?), Bradford (?), Rapp, Bill Bihner, Pillman, Creed, and Steve Williams. Its 8th and Harrison sanctuary will be completed in 1949.

2/21 An official Episcopal Mission is established here. Ten people are its organizers. They are Mr. Thompson, the undertaker, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Tamm, Mrs. Burke, Mr. and Mrs. Stephenson, Mrs. R.R. Ambert, Mrs. Pendleton, Mrs. Winter, and Mrs. Irving Webb. They will meet in various locations including the home of Wimberly McLeod, the Rialto Theater, John T. Thompson's Mortuary, the Presbyterian Church, and the Central Ward School. On 6/17/24 the St. Alban's Episcopal Church is organized. Its first building is constructed at 317 S. 6th at the corner of 6th and Tyler on a lot purchased for \$250. L.H. Moore heads the building committee that is to erect, at a cost of \$1,500, the wooden sanctuary capable of seating 50 people. It is only in October 1938 that the mission becomes a parish.

1922 The Rev. H. Lueker, who had arrived the year before, of San Benito continues to serve Harlingen Lutherans after Pastor Meyer's departure. It is decided to make both Harlingen and Brownsville a field separate from San Benito. At this time Harlingen's Lutheran group has 48 souls, 31 communicants, and 11 voters. At the end of this year H. Atrops arrives to take charge of the field. He remains until the end of 1924.

1/28/23 The Lutherans, at the home of Ed Miller, take the first step toward an organization. On 4/29/23 the Constitution is signed by H. Engelbrecht, Otto Ingendorf, A.W. Laabs, F. Schmoker, E.W. Hoffman, Henry Hoeldtke, Jake Schmoker, Ed C. Miller, John Post, John Mahres, and Henry C. Meyer.

3/25 Both as a reflection of the city's and its own growth the Presbyterian Church reports a membership of 171 and Sunday School enrollment of 197.

8/22/24 The First Baptist Combes is organized at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Reeves, Sr. under the direction of Brother M.F. Dursy, Associational Missionary. It is to be called Combes Missionary Baptist Church. It has 19 charter members. Its first sanctuary has shutter windows and a dirt floor. In 1929 a more substantial building is erected. On 9/21/51 a new building comes up. Later two wings for education are added. In 1961 the congregation has grown to 450 with John H. Cole, Jr. as pastor. Original members still attending are Mrs. J.J. Wiles, Mr. and Mrs. C.C. Hornsby and Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Woods.

1925 Early in the year a doctrinal disagreement arises among the Lutherans here. Some charter member then left to form another congregation, namely that which would evolve into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

3/25 Traveling missionary, the Rev. Dr. H.W. Emil Listman is ministering to a group of Lutherans here. On 8/23/25 fourteen Lutheran families organize to establish a Lutheran Church of America mission. In the initial group are members of the Hoffman, Matz, W.W. and Clara Altus, Miller, Schmoker, Borchardt, and Laabs families and individuals Mrs. Sanders, Mrs. Elizabeth Bothwell and Ernest C. Barth. The property at 318-322 E. Jackson is purchased then later sold to E.O. Matz. In 1926 its mission is in the small, white, wood frame building on the northeast corner of 4th and Jackson. This is the building which has seen numerous previous uses by the community and various religious denominations. Pastor Nathaniel Sheffer is the congregation's first permanent minister, serving from 1/26 until the summer of 1931. On 6/15/33 a two story parsonage has been built and dedicated to the rear of the sanctuary. Shortly after the church's formation the women of the congregation form a group named the "Evangelical Lutheran Ladies Aid." Mrs. Ed Miller is elected its president; Mrs. John Kretchmer, vp; Mrs. Elizabeth Bothwell, secretary; and Mrs. A.W. Labb, treasurer. Other members are Mrs. Clara Altus, Mrs. Ida Voges, Mrs. Anna Matz, Mrs. E. Listman, Mrs. L. Hector, and Mrs. E. Hibbe.

4/25 St. Paul Evangelistic Church (Lutheran Missouri Synod) is organized. The Rev. A.W. Arndt will become its first resident pastor. First services are held in the Central Ward School. After a \$4,000 loan from the District Church Extension fund is secured, four 25 foot lots on the corner of Third and Tyler are purchased and a parsonage is soon constructed largely with volunteer labor. Several months later an additional loan of \$2,000 is obtained and in September the congregation votes to build a church. It is quickly erected and dedicated 12/6/25. The wooden structure was to be enlarged in the fall of 1931.

4/6/25 Church of Christ members purchase a lot at 3rd and Harrison Streets at a cost of \$200 down and payments of \$100 a year for three years. They build a stucco structure for \$3,000. By 1931 membership has grown to 165. A remodeling takes place in 1938.

11/15/26 The First Christian Church occupies its new and impressive sanctuary at the corner of 3rd and Van Buren. The \$135,000 structure was dedicated 9/3 by the Rev. D. Grant Wagner, pastor.

4/26 The Christian Science Church is organized and, in the same year, the Rangerville Church of Christ.

1926 In this year the Jackson Street lots of the First Baptist Church are sold and lots purchased at the northeast corner of Van Buren and 5th Streets. The following year a large brick sanctuary at 501 E. Van Buren is erected by S.G. Stringer and Associates at a cost of \$90,000 to \$100,000. (An aerial photograph of Harlingen shows the church with its roof still under construction on 9/11/27.) It seats 1,285 and also has classrooms. This comes about under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. W.W. Lee. It is formally opened and dedicated February 5, 1928. In this period the congregation numbers around 394. The debts for this building are paid by 1943. It is in 1937 that this edifice is to receive a pipe organ given as a memorial by Dr. and Mrs. N.A. Davidson. The gift is ably used for the next 28 years by the talented and inspirational musician, Foster Tebee.

1926 Mrs. J. M. Mothershead and her attorney husband take up residence in Harlingen. She will organize the Dorcas Friendship class at the First Baptist Church and teach Sunday School there for 23 years before departing for Brownwood in October 1950. Mr Mothershead, who was born 10/21/89 in Mississippi but lived in Texas 66 years, was to die at age 70.

1/27 The Combes Methodist Church gets started.

1927 J. B. Haas, OMI, becomes pastor and first resident priest after Sacred Heart of Mary Mission is granted status as a parish. The church adopts the name Immaculate Heart of Mary.

2/17/28 Following the invitation of the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce, a Salvation Army Corps opens in Harlingen with a business office in the First National Bank. Cadet Captain L. Monk, who lives at 208 Polk, is its first officer.

1929 mid-year Jose Vallejo, his sons, and brother-in-law, Augustin Martinez, help to rebuild the white frame structure for the parish of the Sacred Heart of Mary Church which changes its name in 1955 to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church.

7/7/29 The Rev. Z.E. King appeals to whites to donate towards a \$300 goal to pay the note on St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church (colored).

### **Organizations –Social, Civic, Service**

4/15/20 American Legion Post 205, Harlingen receives its charter after organizing in 12/19. Its charter members are J.R. Roberts, Morris Chaudoin, Sam H. Chester, S. Finley Ewing, D. F. Jackson, W.H. Johnson, Otis O. Lasiter, H. L. Oler, L.L. Patee, W.O. Liston, R. E. Rader, Paul Rader, John Shipp, Emmett O. Anglin, and H. B White. This year and the next H.L. Oler was elected Commander and M. Chaudoin, Adjutant. In 1922 S. Finley Ewing was Commander and Barney Chaudoin Adjutant. Under his administration the body of Buddy Olivares was returned from France and given a military funeral here. In 1923 Dr. G. A. McBryde was elected Commander and L.H. Moore Adjutant. In 1924 Neil S. Madeley, Sr. was elected post Commander. In 1985 it will have 640 members.

5/4/20 The Better Harlingen Club hosts the Valley Federation of Women's Clubs at a dinner in the Rangerville Hotel managed by George S. Eisert. This latter organization was started by an idea conceived by Alba Heywood of San Benito. In January 1914 he

called a meeting of women's civic groups and others at his home to discuss civic beautification programs. Inclement weather restricted attendance, but the following month a group met in the Harlingen High School and organized the Rio Grande Valley Federation of Civic Clubs whose object was "Beautification of the Valley." Harlingen had no members in this initial group. In 1915 the name was changed to the Valley Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1922 this organization's emphasis was on better roads with the effort led by Mrs. J.C. Myrick.

A Boy Scout troop is organized this year. When it celebrates its fifth anniversary in May 1925, 35 scouts are present. Some will soon attend a ten day camp located 7 miles east of Harlingen on the Arroyo Colorado. Scoutmaster Lynn Kellogg is commended for his work with the boys.

This year Harlingen Masonic Lodge A.F. & A.M. 1132 receives its charter.

10/13/20 The Order of Eastern Star Chapter 641 is organized in Harlingen with 20 members. Mrs. Lizzie Lee Sanders is Worthy Matron and J. M. Payne is Worthy Patron.

1/13/21 The Harlingen Study Club, a literary organization and the first culture club in Harlingen, is established. Mrs. J.C. Myrick is president. Other officers are Madams H.E. Sumners and S.P. Nicholson, vice-presidents; Mrs. I.C. Webb, recording secretary; Mrs. Morris Chaudoin, corresponding secretary; Mrs. H.D. Seago, treasurer; and Mrs. A.L. Brooks, parliamentarian, and who also chaired the constitution/by-laws committee. At a meeting at the First Baptist Church the club commences a library project upon the suggestion of Mrs. F.L. (Ina) Crown. Initially this is a single bookcase, containing eleven donated books, in the American Legion quarters. Later this is moved to the Commerce Street office of Fulton Jones, then the offerings are expanded in a downtown space rented for \$6/month. Over time the library moves from Loeb's Feed Store to the small City Hall on Commerce to the newer combined City Hall and fire station at 2nd and Van Buren Streets. The Club continues to operate the library until 1925 when it presents the library to the city. In 1927 the library is in one room in the Women's Building in Bowie Park on Monroe. In 1941 an east wing room is added to triple the space. The club's 1922-24 president is Mrs. H. E. Sumners and for 1924-25 Mrs. A. Goldammer. On 5/25/78 after 57 years of existence the Study Club of Harlingen disbands. In addition to volunteering help to the library it commenced a student loan fund in 1932 and supported the Well Baby Clinic. In the early 30s the Club sponsored a literature contest for aspiring writers. In 1926 Mrs. J.C. Myrick and Mrs. A. Goldammer wrote what the Club meant to the community: "The unique contribution of the Club to the city of Harlingen has been the generation of ideas, and the nurture of those ideas until enterprises were accomplished. It is impossible to consider any community project without thinking immediately of some member of the Club connected with it."

3/1/21 The Red Cross nursing service resumed after a six month lapse. School children were being examined for health and dental conditions.

5/25/21 The Chamber of Commerce is chartered. Its officers are A.L. Brooks, president, Charles P. Perry, 1<sup>st</sup> vice-president, Charles S. Wood, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president, and J.B. Challes, secretary-treasurer. It will publish an attractive 28-page booklet titled "Harlingen the Gateway to the Magic Valley of the Lower Rio Grande." In it are numerous photographs taken by Harlingen photographer Pelkey.

12/30/21 The Better Harlingen Club has landscaped the Depot surrounding with the aid and skills of A. B. Monnett. A Tourist Park in the southeast part of town near the lake is another of the club's projects. It will be provided wood, water, and lights for automobile tourists.

1922 The Volunteer Fire Department reorganizes with 16 members. Bert Gamble becomes its first fire chief and O.N. Joyner is assistant fire chief and fire marshal. Harlingen's first service club for men, the Rotary Club, is organized. Ironically in 1925, while on vacation, Chief Gamble's house will turn down due to a fire of unknown origin.  
1/13/22 The Better Harlingen Club beautifies Travis Park by planting shrubs and palm trees around its periphery.

2/23/23 The Harlingen Rotary Club is chartered. By 1985 it has 178 members and the North Harlingen Rotary Club has 100.

1923 The Rio Grande Valley Shrine Club of 32nd degree Masons is organized. This same year the Valley's first Kiwanis club organizes in Harlingen and in 1985 it will have 44 members.

4/5/23 Scouts hold Annual Parents Banquet with 40 parents and 42 scouts in attendance. Prominent business men make presentations. It is announced that the annual camp will open on May 25. Scout Master Kellogg is congratulated on his success in organizing and conducting the Harlingen troop.

12/23 By this month the membership of the Arroyo Country Club totaled 109. Thirty five members were from Harlingen, 41 from San Benito 22 from La Feria, 6 from Raymondville and 5 from Lyford. The club languished until rejuvenated in April 1926 when more than \$11,000 was raised in cash from stockholders who elected a slate of nine directors.

10/17/24 The Chamber of Commerce is reorganized. It settles "down to a constructive systematic program that with a continuation of the Harlingen spirit "We Do" is certain to accomplish much for the city." Chairman of the various committees are: roads and highways, John C. Myrick; railroads and transportation, A.L. Brooks; membership and finance, Tyre H. Brown; health and sanitation, Dr. F.B. Walsworth; civic affairs, J.H. O'Connell; publicity and advertising, J.F. Rector; schools and education, A.A. Kimmell; reception and entertainment, Polk Hornaday; rural advancement, J.F. Rogers; industrial, B.W. Elwing; and church, Rev. Herbert McDermott.

4/1/25 The Music Lovers Club is organized and federated as part of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs. In 1960 it will still have 37 members and 25 associate members. Honorary life members are its first president, Mrs. S.R. Jennings, Mrs. B.f. Johnson, Mrs. F.L. Crown, and Miss F. Flora Todd. Two other charter members are Mrs. J. B. Challes and Mrs. Carl Wood.

After a contest the Chamber of Commerce selects "Harlingen Wants You!" as city's new slogan.

This year Tyre Brown is president of the Kiwanis Club.

In this first year after Miriam "Ma" Ferguson is elected governor and it loses political clout, the KKK regularly advertises in the Harlingen paper. The small classified ads read:



Ku Klux Klan: Regular meetings of Kameron County Klan every Friday night at 8 o'clock on Klan's grounds at A.P.A sign near arroyo bridge between Harlingen and San Benito. Visiting Klansmen cordially invited. SECRETARY, Box 749, San Benito.  
3/27/25 A Boy Scout Clubhouse of 20' x 26' is built after volunteer contributions of \$400 are made. Carpenter Union No. 3190, under M.R. Hayes, donates the work to erect it.  
5/1/25 An extensive Music Week program organized by Mrs. Solon R. Jennings for the State Federation of Music Clubs is offered.  
6/5/25 State historian and president of the History and Landmark Association, Miss Adiria de Zavala of San Antonio, is here at the invitation of Mrs. John Myrick and Mrs. T. C. Webb to help to form a county historical society.

8/24/26 H.L. Starnes becomes president of the Retail Merchants Association after A.J. Rabel resigns. The association has had its office in the Seale Sanitary Grocery Store at 122 W. Jackson.

On 9/14 this group, with Mrs. Mary Moses as secretary, opens its office in the new Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel as does George Toolan, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce. Volunteer Fire Department sponsors this year are: Mrs. Floyd Smith, Mrs. B.P. Gamble, the Misses Brindley, Dorothy Burchard, and Mamie Anglin. John B. Challes is secretary.

2/11/27 The Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America is organized. Dr. R.E. Utley is chairman of the local Boy Scout District committee.

3/18/27 Solicitations are being made to obtain 100 members at \$300 each to form the nucleus for a new country club.

8/15/27 The Lions Club of Harlingen organizes with a charter from the Mission Lions Club. This service organization was founded nationally in 1917. Among its 49 charter members who will celebrate 37 years later are J.L. Head, C.H. Hamilton, Emmett Anglin, Polk Hornaday, and Harold F. Looney. In the early years the club met at the Van Noy Interstate Restaurant, Woman's Building, Plaza Hotel, and the Cadillac Grill. Its motto is "We Save." In 1985 it has 70 members. By its 75th anniversary in 2002 the Harlingen club will have 45 men and women members including Mayor Connie de la Garza and life members Ed Marcum and R.W. Liston.

In the Briggs-Coleman area Kate Adele Hill is holding demonstration meeting in various homes. Ms. Hill of San Angelo took the job of county agent in June 1925, succeeding Mrs. Jewel Smith. Some residents of the area are Mrs. H.G. Blunk, Mrs. A.W. Dixon, Frank Smith, Otto Ingendorff, and Albert Hattie.

It is 1927 that the Boy Scout camp to be named Camp Perry becomes a reality. Land is obtained along the west bank of the Arroyo Colorado west of Rio Hondo. Harlingen realtor Charles Perry donates some land for the camp, which will eventually encompass 260 acres. He takes an active role in building the stone chimney adjacent to the main hall. Perry is married to Velma Simmons and their daughter is to be Vonnie Mae Perry Westbrook of 802 N. 1st Street. In 2002 the camp will celebrate its diamond jubilee anniversary. It continues to serve scouts from across the Valley.

5/27 The Sessions and Board of Deacons of the First Presbyterian Church hold a joint meeting to consider sponsoring a Boy Scouts of America troop. They agree to sponsor such a troop and eventually the pastor's son, J. Stuart Pearce, Jr., becomes its first scout-

master. This troop, Troop 10, will be active into the 1980s and be one of the area's leading units.

1928 The attractive \$10,000 Woman's Building, erected in the southwest corner of Bowie Park, is occupied. The first movement in this direction had been made on 4/23/26 when Madams J.T. Foster, C.A. Macy, and N.H. Liddell appeared before the city council to request the removal of the present city hall to Bowie Park for use of ladies clubs.

7/14/28 For ten days 300 scouts from across the Valley enjoy the 2nd Annual Encampment held at Camp Perry. On 8/26 Camp Perry is officially dedicated in an elaborate ceremony.

9/27 The Palmetal Home Demonstration Club is organized with Mrs. C.O. Moore as president and Mrs. O.C. Vinson as secretary.

### **Miscellaneous**

1/16/20 In competition with Brownsville for the site for the erection of a Baptist hospital, Harlingen pledges \$75,000 according to a *Brownsville Herald* article on this date. This would allow the building of a \$150,000 facility or twice the cost of the originally planned one.

Robert Hamilton, Sr., who had lived in Little Deer Creek in Falls County, TX before moving to Harlingen in 1917, and Jack Earnest Stack were among leaders who saw a need for a hospital here. Hamilton worked as a bookkeeper in the Texas State Bank of Harlingen 1917-20 before opening an insurance office selling Home Insurance. He and others approached Lon C. Hill and the Harlingen Townsite and Improvement Company, and Hill pledged \$15,000 toward the building. Short of cash, the company conveyed four lots just south of where the hospital would eventually be built. Two stipulations were that: the hospital would cost more than \$50,000 and be built in three years (3/2/23). Incorporators were Dr. N.A. Davidson, G.S. Stringer, and Judge Fred Bennett of Mercedes. When the Baptist Sanitarium of Harlingen was not built within this time frame, the lots were reconveyed on 9/27/24 to the Cameron County Realty Co. based in Dallas. In return the hospital pursuers received lots on F Street without conditions. The white stucco building is built in the 600 block of F Street by W.T. Liston and Sons to designs by local architects Elwing and Mulhausen. Birger A. Elwing was born in Linkojning, Sweden on 6/13/67 and educated at Chalmers University in Gothenburg. He married Sigus Hedstrom on 12/16/89 and settled in the Valley in 1919. The 35 bed facility opens 1/22/25 and fully in May 1925. Its charter members are S.C. Tucker, Brownsville; Frank Robertson and Dr. Clarence M. Cash, San Benito; J.T. Foster, S.G. Stringer, C.S. Wroten, and Dr. N.A. Davidson of Harlingen; Dr. R.E. Utley and Fred E. Bennett of Mercedes; E.C. Couch of Weslaco; Dr. L.M. Davis of Donna; and G.T. Balch of McAllen. The capacity of the steel-framed structure is increased in 1943, and again in 1946, so that by 1956 it is equipped to care for 135 people. The facility closed in 1957 with the erection of a new hospital complex near S. Ed Carey Drive. Dr. David Nickell, who came to work in the F Street hospital in 1947, is the last of the F Street doctors to retire when he does so at age 73 on 10/29/84.

1920-26 Chaperoned dances take place in Lozano Hall to the music of a record player.

Not only is prohibition enforced but so are the "blue laws" wherein retail firms are suppose to be closed on Sundays.

9/13/20 The Harlingen to San Benito road is badly flooded. This necessitates a 15 mile detour via Rio Hondo and the ferry across the Arroyo Colorado. There is no direct road from Kingsville to Harlingen. What exists is a barely passable stretch of sandy road between Falfurrias and Edinburg.

8/27/21 Ku Klux Klansman, 104 strong, march down Main Street after citizens celebrate electric street lighting inauguration with a block party. Masked and in full regalia they carry sign warning bootleggers to go and promoting "White Supremacy." On 8/31 John Myrick, J.F. Seago, and T. Kingston lead an ad hoc meeting of 150 individuals in Lozano Hall. In two resolutions the body condemns the KKK as well as vice, and, importantly, supports the constituted form of government in enforcing the laws.

11/21 Miss Hesta Stuart, daughter of Robert Terry Stuart, is elected the first queen of the Valley Mid-Winter Fair. Her ladies –in-waiting are Misses Annie Rooney Hill, Erin McKinnep, Eunice Simmons, Cora Cloud, Doris Snavely, and Betsy Bass.

12/9/21 Governor Pat Neff is scheduled to attend the fair.

This week the Aeolian Concert Company presented the Lyceum Course number at the high school auditorium. The company consisted of three girls who gave a very creditable program.

June 1922 (late) Excessive flows in the Rio Grande and overflows into the Arroyo Colorado and along the line endanger train service. It is only on 7/2 after 11 days that the first train arrives in Brownsville.

11/22 Ben Pupkin and Joe Roberts are planning the parade for the 12/12-12/15/22 four day Mid-Valley Winter Fair. Planning to attend are Senator-elect Earle B. Mayfield, Governor Pat Neff, and Governor-elect Walton of Oklahoma among other dignitaries. Superintendent of Schools, Paul E. Phipps is chairman of the fair committee and executive officer of the fair organization as well as handling publicity. In April of 1921 he conceived holding a flower show. That started ideas rolling and soon livestock raisers, citrus growers, and merchants offered to help. Their efforts were to evolve into the Valley Mid-Winter Fair. In effect they were fulfilling Lon C. Hill's slogan of having "Guts, Gumption and Getup."

Baptist authorities announce that Harlingen will have one wing only of the hospital to be built here in 1923. The whole structure is put at \$150,000 cost.

1923 The first locally owned plane is brought to town. Leman Nelson and Clay Rader have purchased a surplus WWI bi-plane, still in its crate. They purchase an engine for it bringing the total cost to \$600. Later it is destroyed by high winds. In time Leman Nelson and Bill Williams open a flying school. Two students plan to hi-jack the plane to Central America. With Nelson in the front cockpit, the student shoots him while airborne, intending to dump the body in the Gulf, land, and pick up his accomplice. Instead the novice crashes between Harlingen and San Benito. As rescuers move to the plane he commits suicide. The 33 year old Leman is the son of Mr. & Mrs. R.W. Nelson. He is an orchardist and former representative for Magnolia Oil.

4/6/23 The Cadmean Chautauqua Company is due here 4/15 for a four day program including musicians and lecturers of national reputation.

6/3/23 The Harlingen Municipal Band is organized. Seventeen members in sharp white uniforms and caps are under the direction of H.H. Schanders. They give weekly concerts at what will be the site of the Reese-Wil-Mond hotel. As early as 1919 black-uniformed bandsmen from somewhere are summoned to greet the trainload of home seekers disembarking in Harlingen.

12/23 By the time of this year's fair its organizers are offering a Tourist Park site with free water and lights.

1923-26 A small ten room, u-shaped hospital painted white is the first to serve the community. It is situated on the east side of F Street between Harrison and Jackson and faces west. Owned by Mrs. Ida Gilbert, it is staffed by two nurses from Chicago. The first is Miss Mary (Maria) Yeager. She had arrived here to look at property she had purchased. She found it undeveloped and, while staying at Mrs. Gilbert's rooming house on E. Van Buren, suggested to Mrs. Gilbert that she invest in a hospital to serve the community. Mrs. Gilbert and her husband Louis bought the lot on F Street on 3/26/23 from W.W. and Rose Alaniz. She then purchased two identical army barracks located south of the Arroyo near Rangerville and joined the two with another building. Miss Julia Bassart, a dietician, joined her friend and was responsible for hospital housekeeping while Mary handled the floor duties. The seven patient rooms charge \$5 a day. The hospital is staffed by doctors, N.A. Davidson, Casper and Alfred M. Letzerich. One incident involving the hospital is when law officer Johnson and Atiliano Sanchez shot one another in a confrontation. After being brought to the hospital and placed in opposite wings, Johnson survives his wounds, but Sanchez is to die 6/2/23. The women's hospital is made obsolete once the new Valley Baptist Hospital up the street comes into full use in 1925. In 1973 land owner Louis Levine donates the "little hospital" structure and, through the efforts of Betty Murray, the RGV Museum board agrees to accept it at the museum site. Mrs. Gilbert is well known in the community for she operates the popular Gilbert House on E. Van Buren. In addition to providing rooms it will become famous as an eatery when it commences serving the city during the Hurricane of 1933. The Gilberts first came to McAllen from Missouri due to her asthma then built the stucco hotel in 1920. The hotel was sold to Mrs. Bell Thaye in 1943, and she in turn sold it to the city in the 1950s to become a parking lot for city hall. The building itself was moved to a site on Airbase Road. Ida Gilbert died November 26, 1974.

1925 Stuart Place is being promoted by the Stuart Place Demonstration Club. It is joined the next year by the Clio Demonstration Club and in 1928 by the South O' Harlingen Demonstration Club.

Valley-wide individuals organize to build the Arroyo Country Club on 222 acres which is to be ¼ mile south of the city limits and adjacent to the arroyo. The planned picturesque clubhouse and course is never built by this particular group.

The weekly Harlingen newspaper frequently advertises visiting entertainment. In January the Grandi Bros. Stock company offers a play "Just Plain Folks" with vaudeville performances between the acts. One of these is the Calkins sisters. The show takes place in a big tent near the corner of Hill and Monroe just west of the Verser House.

In the classified ad section of the paper, a weekly-run ad

3/30/25 Now in the era of Prohibition, Cameron County Sheriff Sam Robertson runs a "Note to Parent" in the paper. It reads: I respectfully suggest that you check up on the movements of your young sons and daughters at night.

There is quite a group of young folks who are from good families, who have been in the habit of holding wild "Parrandas" or (Tequila Parties) in the brush not far from Harlingen. My deputies have orders to bring these young people to JAIL if these parties are repeated after this notice is published.

9/30/25 The School of Nursing is established this year at the Valley Baptist Hospital. For its first full year of operation ending this date the hospital and S.G. Strugh, president of VBH (trustees) reports that 564 patients were treated. The breakdown has 285 surgical patients, 165 medical, 35 obstetrics, 35 infants, and 70 accidents.

6/8-11/26 Harlingen hosts the 50th Convention of the State Firemen and Fire Marshals' Association. Firemen and their family members number 4,000. Meetings are conducted in the High School auditorium.

1/4/27 The Rio Grande Valley Historical and Landmark Society, Miss Paul Hill, secretary, holds its quarterly meeting at the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel.

8/16/27 In a letter, later to be oft quoted, Lon C. Hill relates to Harlingen postmaster J.F. Rodgers how he named Harlingen. It contains inaccuracies and is misleading.

12/6/27 The Rio Grande Valley Civic Grand Opera Association gives several performances in Harlingen of Verdi's Aida.

12/23/27 Babe White, a professional daredevil who has climbed the 63 story Woolworth building in New York City, scales the nine story Baxter Building and performs other stunts.

7/3/28 Three postal worker associations hold a three-day convention in Harlingen. The workers number 800, but with wives and others totals are expected to be 1,600-2,000.

7/13/28 Myron F. Wood, secretary-manager of the Chamber of Commerce, announces a beautification plan to make the city more visually attractive.

7/27/28 The Harlingen Firemen's Band continues giving its summer weekly concerts. Joe Lyday is its director.

8/10/28 Jack Pickens, manager of the Arcadia and Rialto movies theaters, announces that Harlingen will have the first "talking picture" operation in the Valley when Vitaphone-Movietone and Baby Vitaphone make the installation. On 12/15 the first talkie "The Singing Fool" with Al Jolson is shown, and this is followed by "The Terror".

10/9/28 A wild lynx is captured alive in the Rangerville area and put on display at the Harlingen Zoo. This compensates somewhat for the loss of the zoo's lioness Queenie who died 7/30 despite the efforts of veterinarian Dr. Traylor.

10/23/28 On his 50th anniversary year as a conductor, Lt. Commander John Philip Sousa, the famous composer and band director, comes to the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium with his 80 musician band to play a matinee and an evening concert. The School district awards 1000 tickets to deserving students. Sousa evaluates a student band performance and individual solos. The next year Joe Lyday, who is the high school band director, brags that the band received national recognition for its accomplishments after the Sousa visit.

11/28 The largest amount of cash to date is the \$3,000 allotted for premiums at the Valley Mid-Winter Fair. Eleven silver loving cups are also to be awarded.

11/15/28 The Watter's one-story frame house burns down. The family had pioneered a variety store in the city. D.W. Watters had built a two-story residence in the adjacent lot.

11/16/28 Victor Herbert's *Naughty Marietta* is performed at the Municipal Auditorium which seats 3,200.

11/22/28 Packers and shippers Harper and Fitzgerald of Stuart Place advertise "World's largest citrus display" at the fair.

11/25/28 In their fourth year being represented at the Fair, the Women's Demonstration Clubs will have their own separate building. Many advertisers place ads in the *Harlingen Star* to entice Fair visitors. Missouri Pacific has a red barn with numerous farm exhibits at the site. The Gateway Bridge Company, Brownsville takes a half-page one inviting attendees to visit Matamoros—The Gateway to Old Mexico. C. H. Swallow Land Office takes a similar size to promote its Alamo area citrus orchard land. The Valley Baking Co. that opened its new plant without fanfare about a year ago, now invites visitors to tour the facility to see how its Butter-Nut Bread is produced.

W.A. Snake King offers a \$5 prize and a visit to his Brownsville zoo for the best school child's 100 word essay impression on Big Boy, the gorilla to be exhibited at the Mid-Winter Fair. The 25-car George Loos Carnival is also going to be featured at the fair that is to run 11/27 thru 12/1. Our attractions are a hog calling contest, daily band concerts, and fireworks displays. The opening day will honor the American Legion and Texas Governor, Dan Moody. Helping to promote attendance, the Missouri Pacific Railroad offers discount fares ( 1 1/5) to Harlingen for roundtrip passage from towns north of San Antonio and Houston where the fare is normally above \$4.00. J. M. Green, police and fire commissioner, John T. Floore, vice president of the fair, and F.C. Ludden of CP&L make a circuit of the Valley to drum up interest.

12/17/28 The hit musical Broadway "Rio Rita" is performed with a cast of 96 including a beauty chorus of 50. The NY Times labeled it "The Queen of All Musical Comedies." A performance of the Freiburg-im-Breslau Passion Play takes place in it in 1929. Other prominent attractions utilizing the theater in its early years are the production of George White's Scandals, singers Lily Pons and Madame Schuman-Heink, and lectures by Eleanor Roosevelt and arctic explorer Richard Byrd. Soon the Little Theater of the Last Frontier of the Magic Valley is organized by Harlingen members.

12/15/28 The Hill homestead at Fair Park is to be torn down to make room for new fair structures. After consideration it is later moved across the road.

1929 (spring) An aerial photo of the city shows Bowie Park having but two buildings—the Womens Club and a small frame building in the northwest corner. The Central Ward School also occupies the whole city block with its playing fields to the north.

5/9/29 Forty merchants to display Child's Health Care Day posters according to Miss Adele Ronencker, Harlingen nurse with the Cameron County Health Unit.

1929 This year two magazines are published in Harlingen. They are the *Valley Baptist Messenger* and *Texas Citriculture*. E.C. Watson is associated with the latter.

1/1/29 As a guide to aviators the name Harlingen is painted in 8 foot letters atop the roof of Ice Plant No. 1. A sign on the west side of town is to be erected to welcome visitors.

1/29/29 Flag pole sitting is all the rage across the country. One exhibitionist sits for four days atop a pole on the roof of the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel.

In a celebration marking the 25th anniversary of the coming of the railroad and in what is possibly the first Valley-wide Bathing Beauty Contest Harlingen has a winner, Miss Lila Selina Baker, who will later be Mrs. Alva McCoy Jones. She was sponsored by the Rotary Club. On July 4, 1925 Lila had a first place silver cup in a Bathing Beauty Review in San Benito. This beauty had also been the queen of the first Valley Mid-Winter Fair. Mr. Jones was to become president of the Rainbo Baking Co. and the father of musically-talented Lila Lynn Jones Murphy.

4/15/29 Famed opera singer Madame Ernestine Schuman-Heink is here to perform on her farewell tour. She is 68 years old and performs to an audience of over 2000.

1920s (late) A polo ground will exist in the area now bordered by F, D, and Cleveland Streets.

5/10-13/29 The Passion Play with a cast of 400, including a massed choir of 100, is presented here.

6/29 The *Harlingen Star* on its editorial page daily promotes the following for the city and area:

A Modern, Fully Equipped Airport

A Deep Water Port for Harlingen

A Paved Road from Harlingen North to Corpus Christi and San Antonio

Beautification of "Main Street" Throughout the Valley

Completion of the Rangerville Pumping Plant Road.

7/21/29 S.A. Clevenger of Sebastian conceives the idea to erect a Hall of Fame Building, with all states represented, across from the Municipal Auditorium at Fair Park. Harlingen architect Stanley W. Bliss illustrates it with several beautiful drawings. It never comes to pass.