

On August 23, The *Galveston Daily News* contained this notice: "**J. L. Belch** of Arcadia was in the city yesterday morning. He stated that three dead bodies had been found on the prairie a few miles south of Hitchcock. The first was a little white girl about seven years old, with slightly brownish hair, the second a white boy, 10 to 12 years old, in a bathing suit, and the third a negro woman about 20 years old and weighing about 120 pounds. The boy was buried by **R. M. West**, who found him. The other two were buried by the searching parties who found them. Mr. Belch also stated that he had found, a few miles south of Hitchcock, a casket incased in a steel

box. The silver plate on the casket bore the name "Bernice C. Muller." Any person interested in this casket can communicate with Mr. Belch as to the disposition to be made of it. It is believed that the casket is one buried at Lake View Cemetery (Galveston) several months ago."

As in 1900, wreckage of all kinds floated into a drift at the limit of the storm surge south of Hitchcock, and was mined for materials for repairing and rebuilding houses, barns, and outbuildings. Somehow seed for planting was secured, land prepared, and farm life went on.



Figure 8. Hoshal's Lumber Yard peeks around the cart on Ida Bee



Figure 9. Mary Louise Wilson (Lothrop), Margaret Wilson (Manwell), Selma Wilson (DePitts).

The Great War had been going on for nearly three years before the United States entered it. Woodrow Wilson was re-elected President in 1916 on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." But public sentiment was much aroused from the time of the sinking of the *Lusitania* with the loss of many American lives, and when Germany announced the resumption of unrestricted warfare by underwater craft, that tipped the balance toward intervention. The Declaration of War came April 6, 1917, and the American Expeditionary Force arrived in France in June. Arcadia men in the Army included **Felix Creppon, Orien Shannon, Harvey Belch, Hardie Walker,** and **Lee Chiles.** In the 17

months of combat, American troops participated in the trench warfare and endured the gas attacks that left many survivors with damaged lungs for the rest of their lives. **Felix Creppon** was killed in France a mere two weeks before the Armistice of November 11, 1918, ended the fighting. An Army of Occupation was to remain in Europe for some time. A special celebration in the Christian Church honored Arcadia men on their return. Years later, an oval bronze plaque memorializing Felix Creppon was placed at the base of a young oak tree outside the east entrance to the original Santa Fe High School. Today it is on the lawn in front of the Santa Fe Elementary School South.

The Twenties and John Barleycorn

Arcadia entered the 1920's with Census figures showing a population of about 450, in 115 households. In that year, Warren G. Harding was elected President of the United States with a slogan of "return to normalcy." By that he meant a rejection of entanglement in the quarrels of Europe. But as the decade went on, a segment of society sought to reject entanglement with the long traditions of American culture, especially those restricting personal conduct. "Anything Goes" did not become a hit song without stirring reverberations in the hearts of the young. Likewise "How You Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm, After They've Seen Patee?" which set up a dichotomy between the farm, now characterized as the backwater of life, and the city, now seen in the terms of the fleshpots of Paris.

This attitude came into conflict with the Temperance movement, which had campaigned for decades against the family degradation wrought by alcohol abuse. This struggle had reached even Arcadia as early as 1914. *The Mainland Messenger* revealed on March 18: "Friday Mrs. Moore met with the Arcadia ladies and organized a Women's Christian Temperance Union. At night Mrs. Moore spoke to a large audience at the Christian church. After her lecture she perfected the organization, and the following officers were elected: President, **Mrs. R. F. Smith**; Corresponding Secretary, **Mrs. E. M. Cole**; Recording Secretary, **Mrs. V. G. Hughes**; Treasurer, **Mrs. J. Myles**; First Vice President, **Mrs. Radcliff**; 2nd Vice President, **Mrs. Bard**; Superintendent of Literature, **Mrs. Pourchot**;



Figure 1. Town Baseball Team, 1920.

Row 1. Ike Franks, Gene Rollish, Virgil Hooper, Bobby Lynch (Alvin)

Row 2. Ernest Lynch (Alvin), Joe Baty, Otto Creppon, Orien Shannon, Evans Franks

Supt. of Mothers' Work, **Mrs. Nye Sutherland**. The society has sixteen active members and six honorary members. This is the eighth WCTU which Mrs. Moore has organized in this district." Further, on August 26, 1914, *The Mainland Messenger* reported, "Rev. Dunn, superintendent of Houston district of the Anti-Saloon League, delivered a masterly address Sunday evening in the M. E. Church, to the people of Arcadia."



Figure 2. Ed Powers and Blanche Tully

Many states adopted prohibitions against alcohol, and in January of 1919 the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution imposed a national prohibition against the sale of liquor. Attempted enforcement of this law came into head-on conflict with the freewheeling tendencies of the time, abetted by the black-and-white decadence of the silent film industry, giving rise to the designation of the "Roaring Twenties." Although statistics show that per capita alcohol consumption declined, the myth has been

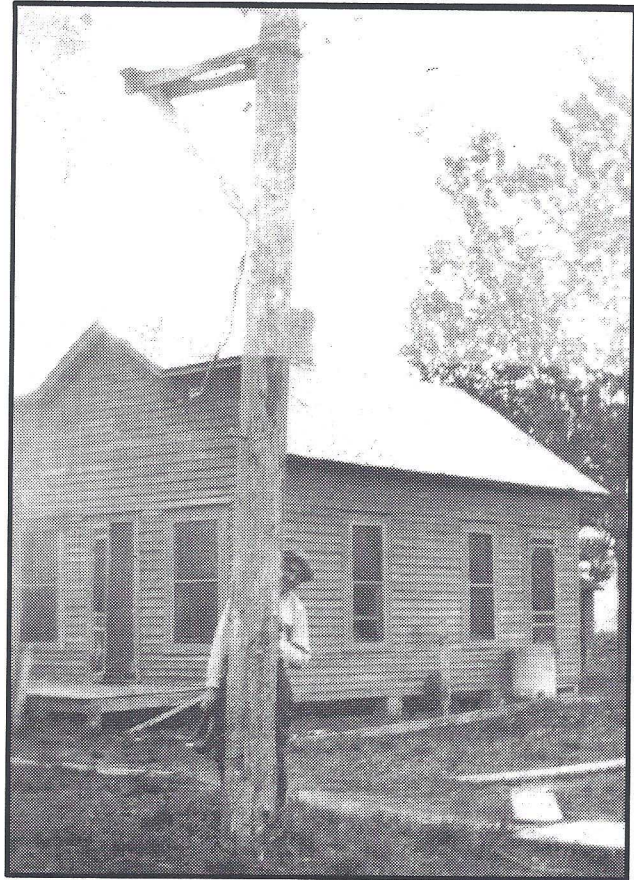


Figure 3. Telephone Office, 4th and Jackson

perpetuated of a time when every grand piano in America was being danced on by drunken, half-clad young women.



Figure 4. Arcadia Home Demonstration Club.
Emma Travis, Unknown, Merle Cole, Agnes Pearson with Mabel, Mrs. Miles, Berta Dyer, Augusta Hoffman, Flora Belle Meek, Merle Cole, Mrs. Stavely, Fredia Neshyba, Maggie Shannon

There were no grand pianos in Arcadia, but young people attended the movies in Alvin and Galveston, enjoyed a freedom from observance by means of the now widespread Ford Model T, bobbed their hair, heightened their hemlines, and pasted clippings of Gloria Swanson



Figure 5. Orems. Lester, Jack, May, Howard

and Rudolph Valentino in scrapbooks. But more characteristic of local life was the town baseball field on the vacant block along the west side of Jackson Avenue between Second and Third streets. So popular was baseball during this era that a small roofed grandstand was built on the Jackson side of the field. A local town team competed with teams from other county towns and Alvin. This same block was used through the Twenties and Thirties for occasional traveling entertainment troupes, magic shows, and occasional tent revivals.



Figure 6. Bertha Walker and Slover Beaver



Figure 7. Dickinson Bayou cemetery Road Bridge, mid-twenties.
James Blackwell Cargile, Louis Saunders, Cora Shannon, Roy Shannon, Mary Belch, Curtis Meek



Figure 8. Evans Franks, Margaret French, Ike Franks, Mariam French



Figure 9. Gilbert Family, 1928
Row 1. Anna, Joseph, Lydia, Elsie
Row 2. Alice, Florence, Theodore, Joe, Jr., Helen, Myrl

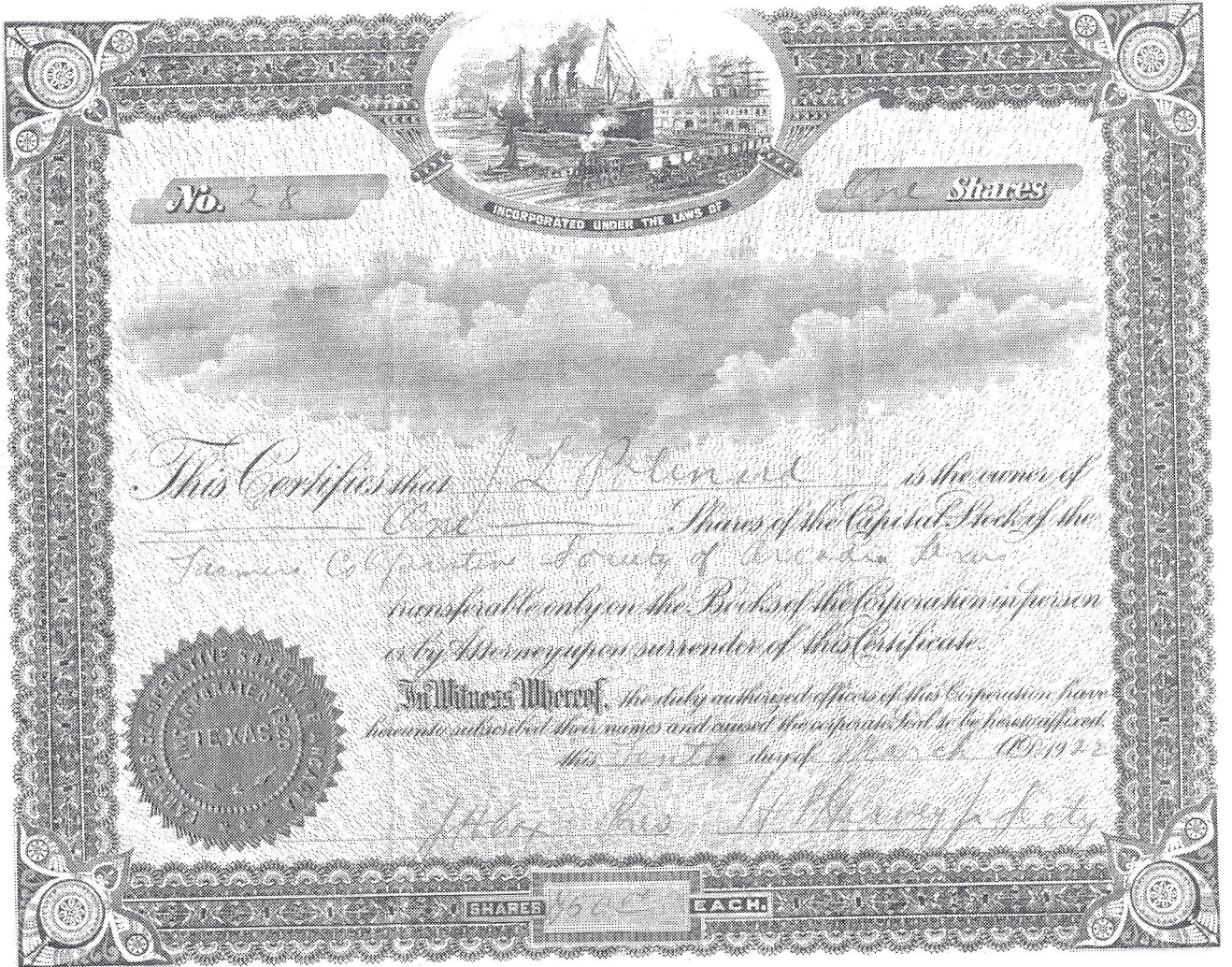


Figure 10. Farmers Co-operative Society Stock Certificate



Figure 11. J. E. Travis in his 24-acre fig orchard.



Figure 12. Andrew Moore Family, 1928
Seated: Emma Powers Moore, Vernon, Verva, Andrew
Standing: Majorie, Marie, Thelma, Janie



Figure 13. 1928

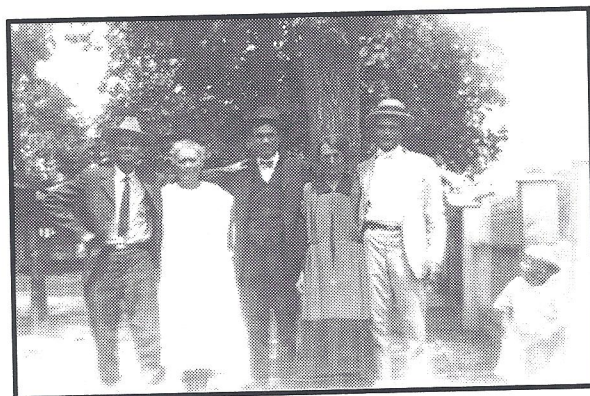



Figure 14. Pourchot Family Reunion
Theodore (Bud) Pourchot, Maggie Long Shannon,
George Pourchot, Amelia Pourchot (West), Frank
Pourchot, Sydney Pourchot



Figure 15. South Arcadia Families, about 1924
Children: Herbert Polinard, Mabel Pearson, Mabel Sturm
Adults: John Polinard, Roy Sturm, Elna Polinard (holding Calvin), Agnes Pearson, Miss Lue Smith, Alpha
Pearson, Alvera Pearson, Delia Sturm, Frank Sturm

Soon rumrunners from Cuba unloaded cargoes on isolated beaches, gangsters distributed whiskey to speakeasies, and country people risked their freedom by operating whiskey stills for the enrichment of "The Man." Ready money was a temptation for some farmers, beset by falling crop prices, and soon "The Man" was picking up newly manufactured booze from hidden caches under bridges, in brushy areas, and concealed in milk cans. The vast sums of money involved in illicit liquor increasingly corrupted local law enforcement. The Feds were hard put to enforce

the prohibition laws. In south Arcadia one young woman watching agents on their way back from raiding a still around the corner was urged to go and see what they had found. She did, amazed at the huge vats that filled each of the four rooms nearly to the ceiling, not realizing she was being set up to be called as a witness. Summoned before the Galveston County Grand Jury, she was asked whether she was related to a Galveston family of the same surname. She said she was not, and members of the jury asked not another question, displaying no interest in what she might have seen.



THE RAINBOW KIMONO

Presented by the Arcadia Girl Reserves
Friday, June 1, 1923.

Cast of Characters

Nellie Van Tassel	Beulah Palmo
Ruth Ashton	Lucy Mae Jones
Alice Marvin	Mary Belch
Isabel Sutro	Margaret French
Beatrice Courtney	Aline Jones
Olive Mercer	Bertha Walker
Winifred Turner	Alice Belch
Edith Jones	Cora Mae Shannon
Rose Jackson	Mattie Palmo

SETTING - Miss Penelope Wright's School for Girls

ACT I.

SCENE:-Nellie Van Tassel's Study

ACT II.

SCENE:-Same as Act I
Time one week later



Figure 17. Margaret Brooks (Mrs. E. Q. Rogers)

Figure 16.

Arcadia did not know the violence of the cities, but one man was shot dead in the night on the porch of an Arcadia home. It was never known whether this was a deal gone bad, or a case of intrusion on private property. As usual, it was not The Man who did time, but The Little Man, and several Arcadians went to federal prison for bootlegging. Many years later, one of those who had been to Kansas displayed no resentment at what had happened to him. Leavenworth is situated above a beautiful bend on the Missouri River. The soil is fertile, and the farm work he was assigned to do was no harder than that at home, and only slightly less rewarding.

Mr. W. G. Shannon 5/3/20

ARCADIA OIL COMPANY
HOUSTON, TEXAS

BOX 341

Acknowledging your \$5 (Cash) Payment on 1172 Shares of Stock.
Balance to be paid the 10th day of each month at the rate of \$5.00 per month.

Please be Prompt.

Acknowledging your ***** Paid in Full for ***** Shares of Stock.
Inclosed find Certificate for same.

Thank you Per *Wm. Bennett*
Sec. & Treas.

Figure 18. An investment in Hope, 1920

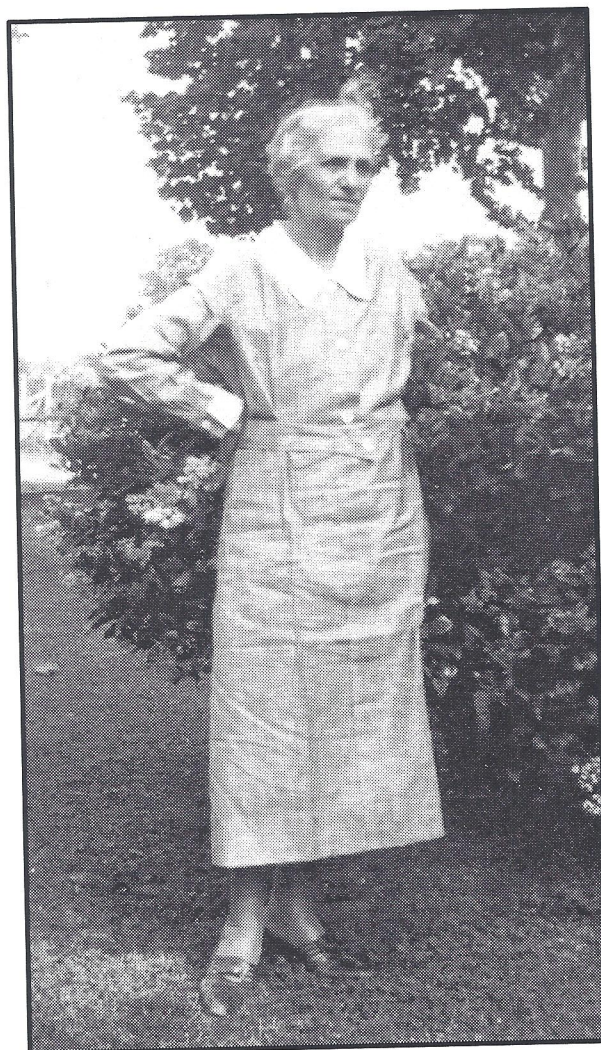


Figure 19. Mrs. Palmo, the lady who had so many guests, but she knew just what to do.



Figure 20. On the Bayshore, about 1926.
Slover Beaver, Curtis Meek, Koy Beaver, Gay Beaver

At The Post Office

Groceries
Hardware,
Dry Goods,
Farming Implements,
Poultry & Stock Remedies,
Paints and Cold Drinks

IF WE HAVEN'T GOT IT, WE CAN GET IT
IN A FEW HOURS.

W. L. WALKER

ARCADIA — TEXAS

Figure 21.



Figure 22. Daura Brothers
Seated. Paul, Pat, Charlie
Standing. Matt, Joe

The Hoof-and-Mouth Disease

When a public figure embarrasses himself with a statement that is uproariously malformed, we say he suffers from "foot-in-mouth" disease. We seldom realize that we are making a play on words naming the most dreaded of livestock diseases, one which brought great havoc and suffering along the Santa Fe: the 1924-25 outbreak of what is popularly called "hoof-and-mouth" disease. With the frustration of so many hopes in the fruit and vegetable raising business, more and more families in the early twenties began to operate dairy farms. Then in September of 1924 the presence of foot-and-mouth disease was confirmed in southern Harris County.

Foot-and-mouth disease is caused by a virus that affects cloven-hoofed animals, living in their blood, milk, saliva, urine, flesh and bones. It is highly infectious. It affects especially the membranes of the mouth and tongue, the skin between the hoofs, and the lining of the first stomach. It can be spread by hay or straw, infected premises, railroad cars, etc. Within three days after exposure, blisters appear on the tongue, mouth and lips, between the toes, and around the top of hoofs. Affected animals eat little, experience fever, weight loss, lameness and drooling. The death rate is especially high in calves and old animals.

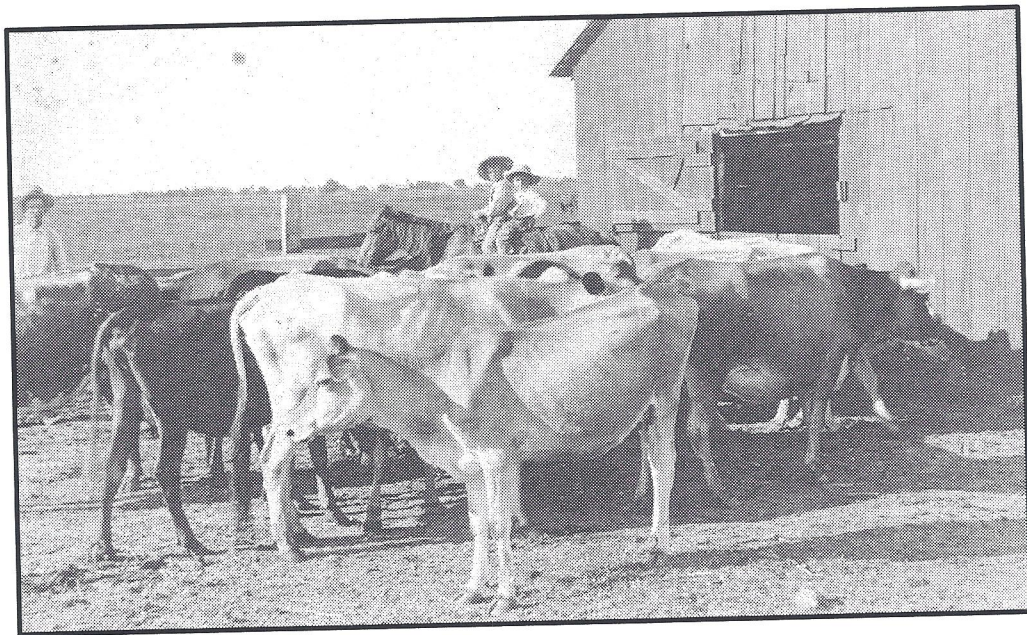


Figure 1:

The United States was free of foot-and-mouth disease until 1870, after which there were eight U. S. outbreaks, the one in 1914 occurring in 22 states. Stringent prohibitions exist today against bringing animals into the United States from countries where the disease still exists.

The discovery of foot-and-mouth in the fall of 1924 resulted in an immediate quarantine for Harris and Galveston counties, and portions of Fort Bend and Brazoria counties east of the Brazos. The outbreak was first discovered in 11 herds of Zebu (Brahman) cattle on a ranch adjacent to what is now Texas Highway 3. It was theorized that it had arrived on foreign ships which in those days carried cattle, sheep, goats, and sometimes hogs, bought at any port for slaughter as fresh meat was required. The local suspicion still survives that a League City rancher either deliberately or recklessly introduced diseased herds for his own profit.

In the early 20's vast tracts of grassland were still unfenced, and herds of dairy as well as beef cattle mingled freely on the open range, making it impossible to prove that a given herd had not been exposed to the disease. In 1924, 8212 head of cattle were slaughtered in Harris County. Despite such a precaution, the disease reappeared in the summer of 1925. An eighteen-mile fence of hogwire was erected to keep the disease from spreading to wild hogs in the wooded areas north of the Houston Ship Channel.

In the words of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Circular 40 (1926): "Following the report, on September 3, of a suspicious herd of cattle thought to be affected with foot-and-mouth disease, near Arcadia, in Galveston County, guard lines were at once established."

Mounted patrols were placed on the outside of pastures involved, and all highways and railroad crossings along the lines were closed and guarded. By September 15 practically all cattle, sheep and goats were disposed of, though a few strays were later found by riders who rode through the woods for that purpose.

"Court injunctions applied for by local interests delayed disposal of infected cattle in Galveston County and the disease spread over a considerable area before it was finally eradicated. The last infected herd in this area was disposed of October 2." Since shipping prairie hay was a major industry at this time, the quarantine cost local farmers in more ways than in the loss of their dairy herds.

The process of assembling, slaughtering, and disposing of the carcasses of thousands of animals posed serious logistical problems. Two assembly, slaughter, and disposal areas were operated in Arcadia. One of these was southwest of town, adjacent to what would be a southward extension of Elm Road beyond Cedar. The other was on the east side of Cemetery Road, north of where 4th Street is now.

Disposal of carcasses was accomplished by incineration, burial, or a combination of the two methods. Animals were burned in trenches, the carcasses piled on pyres of wood, soaked with crude oil. "The system of having a single, long trench was abandoned in favor of a series of shorter trenches somewhat like the spokes from the hub of a wheel, radiating from a central chute. In this method two steam shovels are necessary to keep the work moving rapidly. One is kept excavating while the other is used as a crane for placing the carcasses and covering" (US Department of Agriculture *Department Circular 400*, 1926). Very efficient. But the bawling of hundreds of cattle being driven to slaughter, the sounds of the shots, the odors of the fires and rotting flesh still surge through the memories of those who can remember 1925.

The degree of resentment felt by those being dispossessed of their property shows through the measured words of the official report only faintly. "Within the State, cooperation of officials and organizations was excellent; but there was some opposition by individual stock owners and others in Galveston and Brazoria counties, who were opposed to eradication. They did not believe there was foot-and-mouth disease

in their locality or in the State, but thought that the disease was simply an aggravated form of a malady with which they were already familiar. Since all infected animals were burned and disposed within a short time after visible lesions appeared, the owners had slight opportunity to see advanced cases. Stubborn resistance was often met in purchasing cattle for slaughter, small owners giving the most trouble. Much valuable time was lost in explaining to them the necessity of giving up their stock to prevent further spread of foot-and-mouth disease."

The bureaucratic mind can be glimpsed in

these phrases: self-assured, fully confident of the rightness of its "plan," seeing everything, but feeling nothing. One lone farmer saved his herd at gunpoint, after allegedly encountering inspectors "doctoring the evidence." The rest of the herds went to slaughter, with token payment per carcass.

8369 head of cattle were slaughtered in Arcadia in 1925. Families already beleaguered by losses to freezes, insect pests, and the development of competing production areas started over, once more. There has never been a recurrence of hoof-and-mouth disease here.

Be It Ever So Humble . . .

The homes built by the first two generations of Arcadians are not well documented. Most of them did not survive in photographs. Hurricanes, demolitions, decay, and fire took a tremendous toll on these structures. It is hard to grasp the danger of fire in a rural community a century ago. Heating and cooking were done with coal and wood stoves. Most of the brick flues were not lined with clay fire tile. A little too much sand in the mortar and it crumbled – a little crack and there went the roof. Some stoves had makeshift metal stovepipes through walls or windows. If a stovepipe rusted through at the wrong location, goodbye, house. After kerosene cooking stoves came into use there were many fires from leaky reservoirs or lines, not to mention spills when inverting the filled reservoirs. Rumors of insurance arson abounded during the Great Depression, when money was scarce and desperation plentiful, finally resulting in insurance companies refusing to insure property in the community. All in all, it was not a good place or time to be a house.

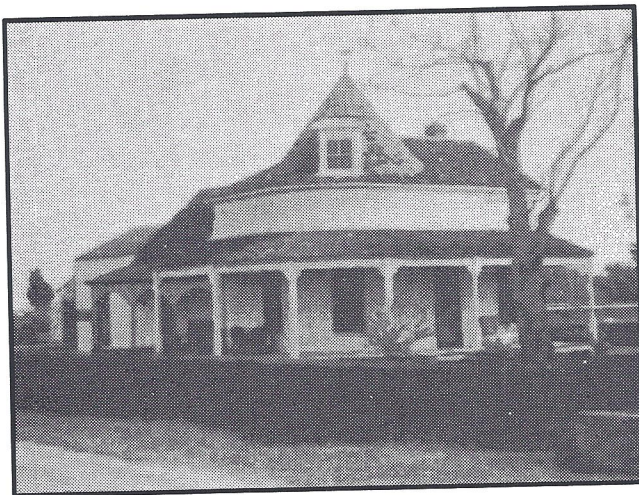


Figure 1. David Hill, 1890's

Apparently there were no private homes that aspired to great architectural pretension. The **David Hill** house of 1895 came closest to High Victorian picturesqueness, but it was only a tiny jewel, a story-and-a-half, with a curved southwest

corner that rose above the cornice line into a short round tower with a beautifully proportioned conical roof. An attached porch nestled along the front and west sides, the walls above it covered with fishscale shingles. The porch had delicate gingerbread ornament below its cornice and on the brackets of the wooden columns. It remains today a striking sight at Frost and Texas Hwy. 6.

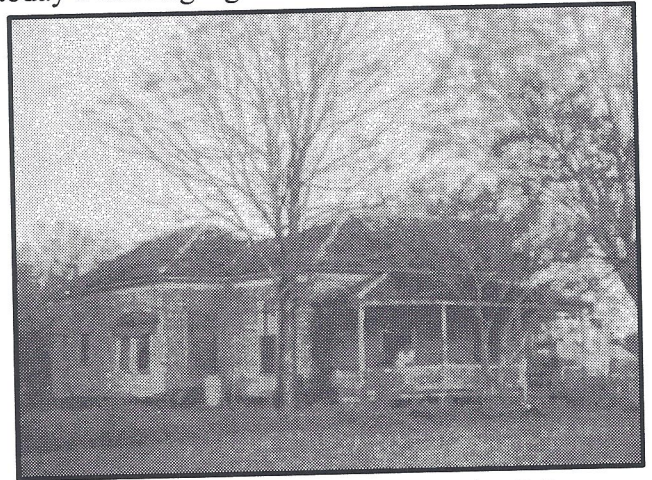


Figure 2. Walter Day, G. Mailloux, Victorian Cottage

The **Walter Day/George Mailloux** house that once stood on the southwest corner of Jackson and 4th showed its Victorian heritage in

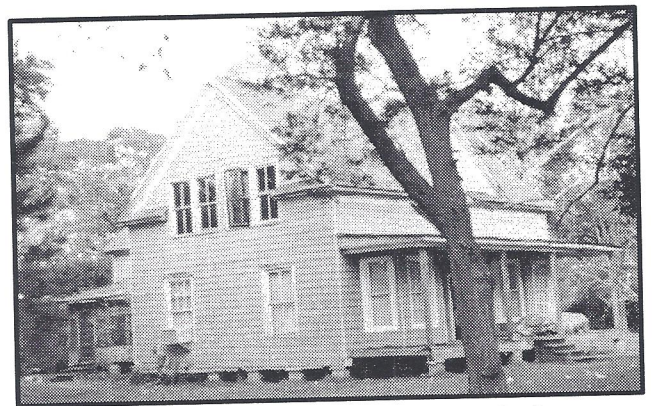


Figure 3. Herman Lassen, 1890's, Arts and Crafts

its picturesque massing of irregular forms, emphasized with hipped roofs.

The **Herman Lassen** house at Second and Downey streets is another survivor from the

1890's. It is a nearly square box, its walls rising several feet above the second-story floor, its fairly steep, side-gabled roof allowing a full second story. A two-story wing projects to the rear. The house sits on piers several feet above the ground, with an attached porch across the front. Its proportions relate it to the shingled houses of the Arts and Crafts style. It still retains its encircling grove of old cedars.



Figure 4. Henry Breed, 1890's, Arts and Craft

Another Arts and Crafts-inspired house is that built in the 'nineties by the **Rev. Henry Breed** at Sixth and Peck. The house is rectangular, two rooms deep, its gabled roof sweeping down to wide overhangs. It is cross-gabled, so that generous space is available for upstairs rooms. Porches are attached under the north and west gables, each with a small gablet marking the entrance. The rows of live oaks on the property probably date back a century.

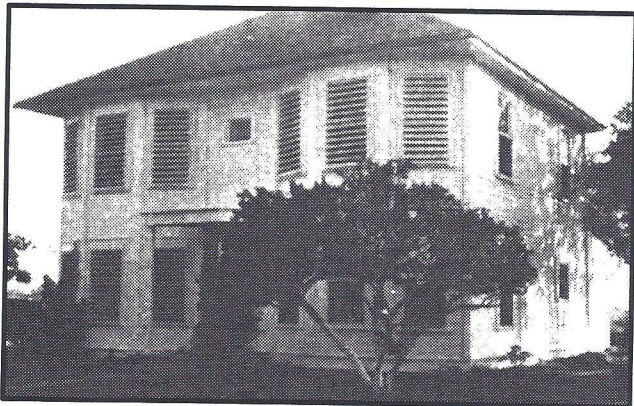


Figure 5. Lem Coker, Tom Rogers, Turn of the Century

Possibly the only other survivor from the nineteenth century is the house built by **Lem Coker** on the south side of Sixth, east of Cark. From the 'twenties it was occupied by the **B. T. Rogers** family. This is a two-storied square hipped-roof house. It is symmetrical, having two bay windows the height of both stories, flanking the centered entrance. Because it faced north, it had only a small attached entrance porch.

A vast amount of debris was driven across West Bay in the 1900 Storm and formed a miles-long tangled mass south of Hitchcock. Large amounts of lumber and timber from this drift were retrieved by wagon and used in house repair and construction for several years. The same source was relied on after the 1915 Storm.

The **Tom French house** (1909), Ida Bee and Clark, is another echo of the Arts and Crafts house: a deep, side-gabled rectangle, its roof coming down from above the second story rooms in an unbroken sweep over the front porch. Other examples of Arts and Crafts characteristics include the Lloyd Travis hipped-roof cottage on Ida Bee east of the French place, and the Evans Franks story-and-a-half on Terry.



Figure 6. Tom French, 1909, Arts and Crafts

Probably the most common house type in the early community was the one-story, square or nearly square, steeply-pitched hipped-roof model. Usually such a house was divided into four rooms, with no hall. Frequently a shed-roof porch would be attached across the back, often screened for

sleeping, and another across part or all of the front. Sometimes sleeping porches surrounded as many as three sides of these houses, as families grew, and attic rooms proved stifling for six months of the year. Numerous examples of this type still stand.

There were many houses of the true ranch style. Such a house was generally one room deep, with a fairly low-pitched side-gabled roof, and an attached porch all the way across the front. Generally one or more rooms would be added in a wing at the rear, producing an "L" footprint. Such houses were often covered with a vertical board and batten siding, and were placed low to the ground. This same basic form, without the front porch, would frequently have a gable-roofed room projecting to the front, and a shed-roofed porch attached in one or the other of the front angles. Such houses frequently had a centered wing at the back, thus achieving an "X" footprint.

Frequently one of these variants on the ranch form would be covered with horizontal siding, in which case it was likely to have neatly

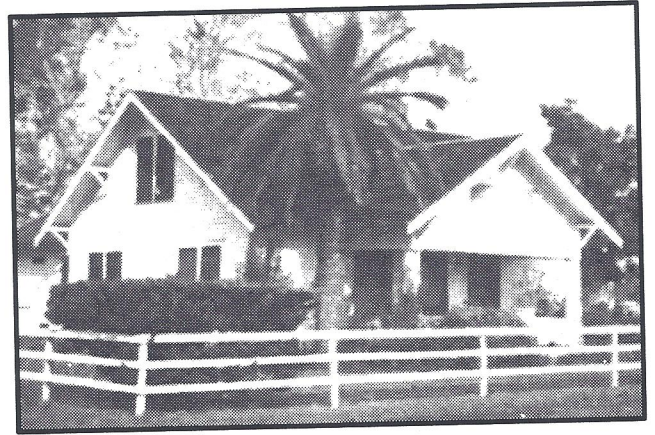


Figure 7. D. G. Hubler/Evans Franks, story-and-a-half, Arts and Crafts

boxed eaves, fascias and soffits, and modest displays of wooden jigsaw gingerbread spindle work about the porches and in the gable ends, achieving a Victorian Cottage appearance.



Figure 8. Daniel Ogilvie/W.C. Shannon, foursquare hipped-roofed and verandahed
Maggie Shannon, lady in dark dress; to her right, son-in-law George Reynolds, to her left her 3 daughters Minnie, Virginia and Cora

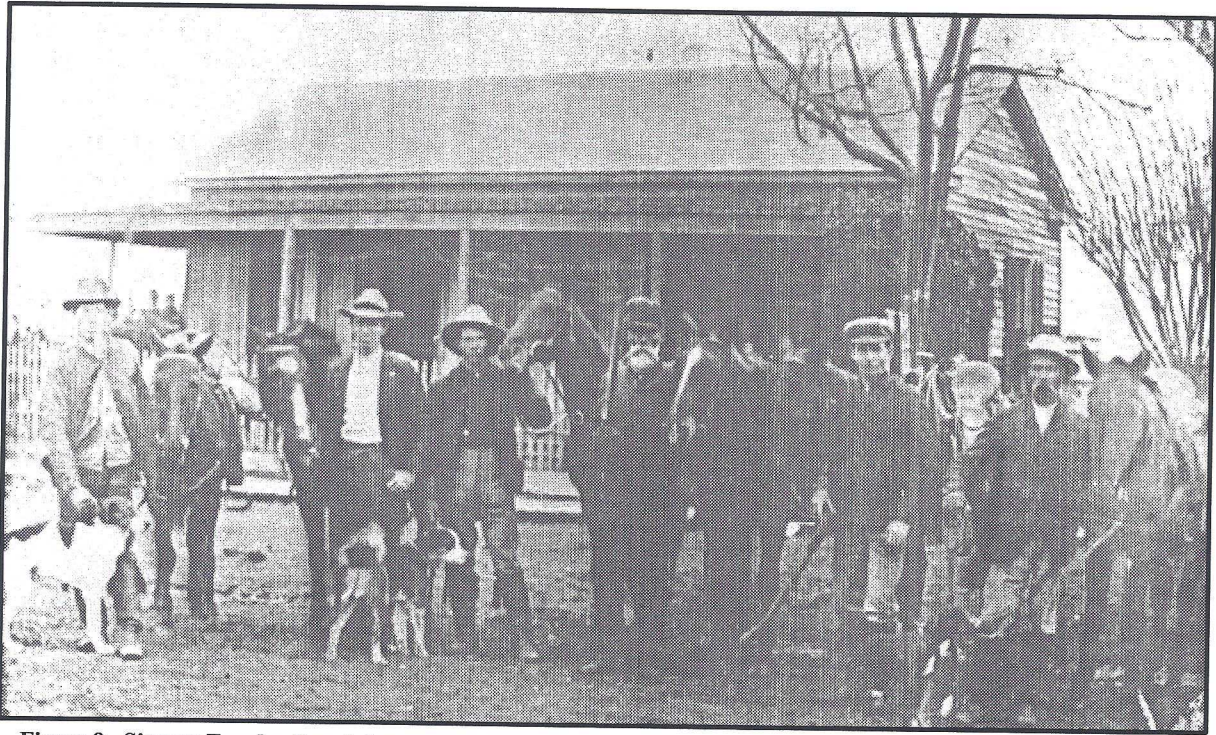


Figure 9. Simeon Franks, Ranch house



Figure 10. Frank Sturm, L-ranch House, South Arcadia
Roy, Delia, Frank Sturm, Miss Lue Smith



Figure 11. J. C. Meek, X-ranch house, Birch Road



Figure 12. John H. Meek, idiosyncratic ranch house, expanded in three directions, Cedar Drive



Figure 13. Lem Bishop, Midwestern cottage

A number of examples once existed of the L-or X cottage, extended upward into two stories, the entrance tucked into one of the front angles. The houses stood out like refugees from an Iowa cornfield, tall and bare, a little awkward without tall trees. One example of the L type still stands on the north side of Third, between Peck and Frost, with its flat side to the street and a gabled pediment centered above its entrance. Similar proportions appeared in single-story examples like the **Lem Bishop** house at 2nd and Jackson.



Figure 14. Boicourt, 2-story Midwestern farmhouse

Landscaping was rare in pioneer communities. The site of Arcadia was open grassland. As late as 1945, one could stand on the railroad and see the woods along Hall's Bayou to the south, and Dickinson Bayou to the north, about seven miles apart. As for flowers, plants that could be grown from cuttings, and those that were at least semi-permanent, like bulbs that could remain in the ground, were favored,

particularly narcissus and red amaryllis, both of which still today mark the sites of old homesteads. Globe arbor vitae appear in the backgrounds of snapshots from the Twenties.

The largest trees planted were cottonwoods, but they were especially subject to storm damage. In Arcadia, some houses, after other more pressing needs were met, had young trees planted around a small yard. Usually these were sycamores, possibly because they were available, mainly because they were fast growing. Even faster growing was the chinaberry, and many of those were planted. Unfortunately, they are not only brittle, but are easily uprooted, both characteristics that are liabilities in storm country. But the odor of their purple blossoms was unmatched. Live oak trees were planted only in a few well-watered locations, most notably near the public park. About the time of World War I, the Holbert nursery offered to plant sycamore trees along both sides of Jackson Avenue from the schoolhouse to the park, if the owners of adjacent property would agree to care for them. Evidently this offer was accepted by those whose houses were along Jackson, because even today after dozens of hurricanes and storms, there are quite a few surviving full-grown sycamores along the street, marking past and present homeplaces.

Apparently the **Palmo** house at Fourth and Peck had the only gambrel roof in the town from the time it was built in 1908 until 1933, when such a roof was constructed on the **Will Shannon** house at Ash and Elm. Of course, the form was widely used for barn roofs, because it provided clear space for loft storage of hay.

Although most of these houses were severely plain on the exterior, they frequently had surprisingly fine interior trim: wide, cochran-mold-capped baseboards, sometimes substantial profiled door and window moldings, often with bull's-eye corners, and picture moldings. Generally the interior walls and ceilings were of 12" shiplap, canvassed and wallpapered.



Figure 15. Mike Palmo, multiple-gambrel-roofed

Nearly all houses that were built from the 'twenties until the 'fifties were of the Craftsman bungalow type: rectangular, with narrow side to the front, front-gabled, with unboxed eaves. Along one side were the living room, dining room (the two sometimes separated only by a screen of two square wooden columns with a low bookcase on each side), and kitchen. Two or three bedrooms were along the other side (in later years including an indoor bathroom). This plan could be compressed into four rooms, but is recognized by the front-gabling. A porch could be attached

across the front (or occasionally set under the main roof), but by far the most frequent plan was an inset porch extending halfway across the front, with entrance directly to the living room. This was the dominant form for modest houses all over America during these three decades, and it was almost universal in Arcadia building during these years, except for those do-it-yourself houses that began as two-room ranch houses and grew as family size demanded and means allowed. These frequently had rooms added across the back under a shed roof.

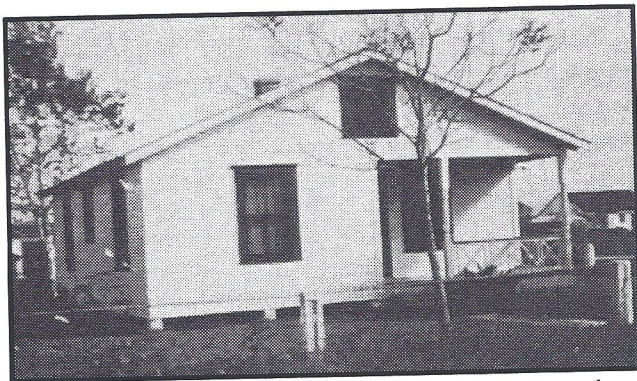


Figure 16. Craftsman bungalow, inset corner porch, 6th and Peck

As the depression began to ease after the middle-thirties, a very few new houses followed the exaggeratedly steep roof of the story-book cottage school then popular among those who could afford it. Among these would be the **Herman Stoneking** (1938) house at Elm and Beriton and the home built by **George and Kate Anna Jensen** east of Clark on Sixth. Also on Sixth is a modified Cape Cod cottage built by **Jack Beaver**. **Gay Beaver's** highly-modified and expanded Cape Cod cottage on Garden (1939) featured a recessed central front porch.

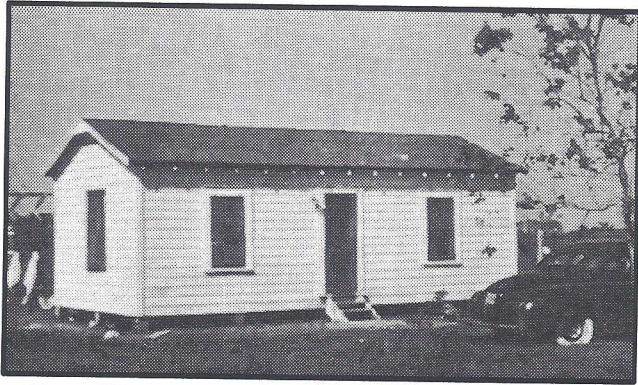


Figure 17. The Do-it-yourself starter home half a century ago, Birch Road

Building materials were in short supply after the World War II, and a number of people secured former Camp Wallace buildings in 1948-49 and adapted them as residences. These can still be identified today by their proportions, and the shape of the gabled roofs, some still having the multi-paned army windows.

Homebuilding resumed slowly after World War II, but about the time of the Korean War during the early 'fifties, company-built homes from a catalog, financed by the value of an owned site, came on the market, first from Downey, soon joined by other companies such as Cut-Rate. This marked the first time that housing was available

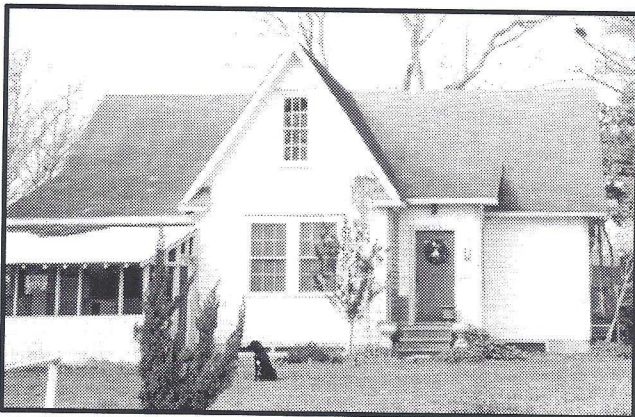


Figure 18. Herman Stoneking, story-book cottage, 1938

without owner-building, or conventional financing and contracting. Within a very few years the townsite and the countryside were dotted with Downey houses. The standard configuration was a frame, side-gabled rectangle, with a porch recessed between a one-car garage and a front-

projecting room with its own front gable. The savings on standardized plans, pre-cut lumber and a well-utilized labor force brought moderate-cost housing within the reach of most of the population for the first time.

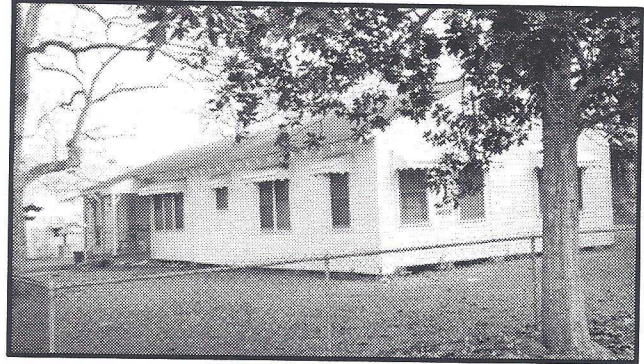


Figure 19. Camp Wallace conversion, 50 years later, 4th and Peck

About 1952 another change that permanently altered the appearance of the community occurred when the first brick-veneered house in Arcadia was built near the Hervey homestead on Sixth. The move to brick was very slow to catch on; the number of brick

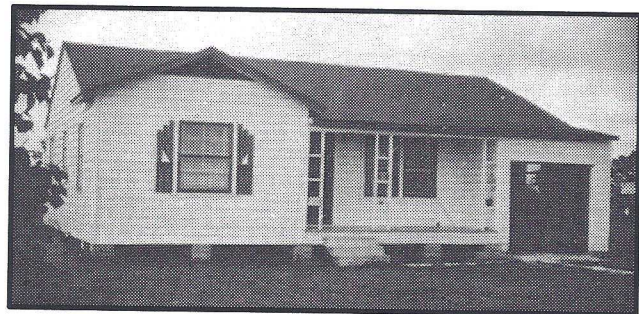


Figure 20. The Downey House, 1950's

houses built in each year could be counted on the fingers of one hand. But gradually the balance tipped toward brick.

With the coming of NASA's manned-spacecraft center in the sixties, all Galveston County communities underwent growth, some of it explosive. Because there was no public water and sewer service in Arcadia, homesites had to be larger than lot-size to stay within the well and septic system requirements that had been imposed

by Galveston County. No subdivision developers were attracted, because of the higher costs involved. However, as larger building sites became more desired, and the economic climate of the 1990's put more money into circulation, builders entered the market with a wide range of stock plans and options. Waves of changing fashions washed over the area, as the low-slung ranch designs of the seventies gave way to the picturesque plan outlines of the 'nineties, culminating in the cloud-capping hipped roofs of

the turn of the new century. Even though the location of the new Santa Fe High School on Texas Hwy 6 west of the townsite is causing the extension of public water and sewer service into the area, the amount of land already cut up into small acreage, and the zoning regulations now in effect in the City of Santa Fe will probably preserve a low population density that will preclude Arcadia's turning into a vast cheek-by-jowl subdivision.

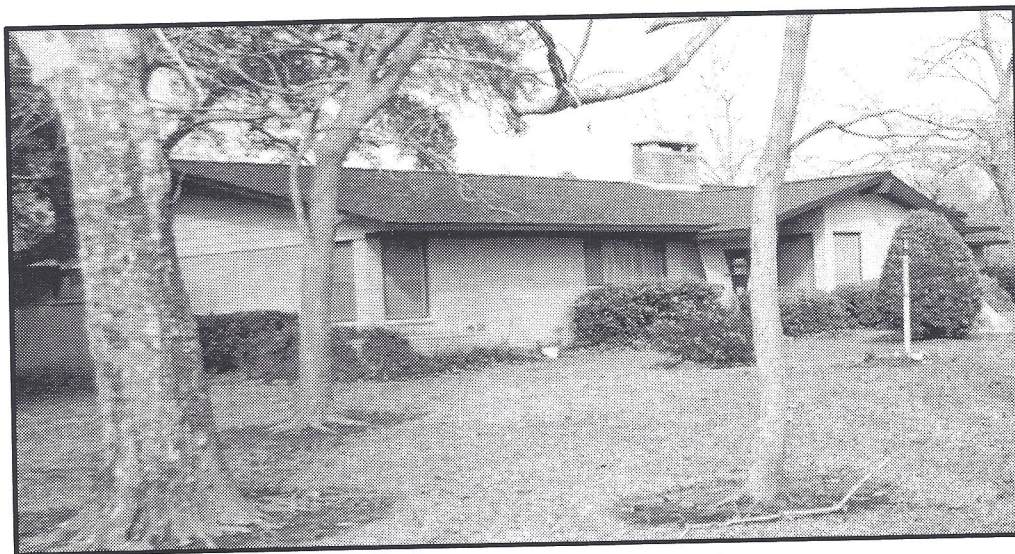


Figure 21. Evans Franks, what a little oil could do in the Sixties, 4th and Terry

The Mail Must Go Through

George W. Judson was the first commissioned postmaster at Arcadia, from April 14, 1891. It is not known why this appointment was not made until a full year after the founding of the town, or when mail service first began. Within a year **Jack B. Alexander's** and **Martin L. Watts'** names appear as postmasters. **William Oneal** served from 1892 to 93, followed by **William Wilson, Jr.**, 1894, and **Robert R. Chamberlain** in 1898. Only the last of these names appears on the 1900 census. Chamberlain is listed as a merchant. It is not known whether he had his own store, or if he worked for David Hill's store, and the post office was there. (Dates and names of official appointments to the Arcadia Post Office, provided from the National Archives and Records Service, are reproduced in *Settlements on the Prairie*, Jean Hurt Thomas, 1998.)

John Hutchison was commissioned Arcadia Postmaster on October 31, 1900, following the 1900 Storm, which had destroyed Hill's store. Hutchison was the 1900 census enumerator for Justice Precinct 4, Arcadia and Alta Loma, and recorded himself as a farmer. His daughter **Flora** is listed as school teacher, and his step-daughter, **Lucy Baldwin**, as music teacher. His daughter Anna had been buried in Evergreen Cemetery in 1899. The family does not appear in the 1910 Census.

E. Q. Rogers, who had come to Arcadia in 1895 as Santa Fe stationmaster, and married the formidable Margaret Brooks, appears as postmaster in June 1902. Perhaps the post office was then in a store he operated prior to his removal to Alta Loma. In 1907 **Davis A. Spencer** was commissioned as postmaster. The Spencer & Owens Store had opened on the site of the former Hill Store, Jackson at Ida Bee, in 1902. It was a two-storied building; much larger than its predecessor, located on the most prominent corner

in the town. In January 1914, **Carrie Owens** was commissioned as postmistress.

In 1920 **John L. Hoshal** became postmaster, and then the post office was in his lumber and builders' supplies store, on the south side of Ida Bee, by now generally called the Galveston-Alvin Road. From 1923 to 1924 the postmaster was **Paul F. Wann**, one of several orphaned nephews and nieces of Margaret Brooks Rogers. In 1924 **James Clarence Rush** became postmaster, and continued to operate the post office in the Hoshal building, which he had

AGE 14—The Galveston News, Friday, April 22, 1955

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



Shown in their wedding picture taken 50 years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Gaylord Kline of Arcadia will be complimented with an open house celebration from 2 until 5 p.m. Sunday at their home in observance of their golden wedding anniversary. Prominent citizens in Arcadia, the Klines have been in business there 28 years, 15 of which Kline also served as postmaster. Sunday's open house is being given by Mrs. Kline's sisters, Mrs. Maude Kinchen and Mrs. W. F. Claggett, and invitations are being extended through the press only. Friends of the couple are invited to attend.

Figure 1. Fannie Kinchen and Gaylord Kline, at the time of their marriage 1905

acquired for a store of his own. **Virginia Belch** was postmistress from 1924 until 1928, with the post office in the same location.

Gaylord Kline began a fifteen-year tenure as postmaster in 1928, when he leased, then purchased, the former Travis Store, on the southwest corner of Jackson and Beriton, from the widow of J. E. Travis, and moved the post office there. Mr. Kline was born in 1871 in Madison County, Virginia, the son of Josiah and Lydia Kline. His was a highly educated family. His brother L. B. Kline was a medical doctor. His sister Bertha G. Kline taught in Houston for 48 years, and his brothers L. B. and Aubrey Kline held doctorates in psychology. Gaylord Kline was educated at George Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee, and studied law for a year at Lebanon College.

In 1893 Mr. Kline began teaching at Fountain Creek, Murray County, Tennessee, then removed to Texas, where he taught at Dublin in Erath County, then superintended the school at De Leon, engaged in the practice of law 4 years in Haskell County, operated a drug business at Rule, and served 4 years as prosecuting attorney for Haskell County. Somewhere along the line, he studied law for a year at the University of Texas. (Mr. Kline's early history is pieced together from a *GDN* article on the Arcadia School, April 9, 1927, and a 1949 Special Edition of *The Angleton Times*.)

It was probably while Mr. Kline was at De Leon that he met and married the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Kinchen, **Fannie Kinchen**, who is believed also to have had a background of law study. About 1907, Mrs. Kline was stricken with rheumatoid arthritis, which deformed and crippled her, confining her to a wheelchair for the last forty-some-odd years of her life. The Klins moved to Houston, where he worked for the Morgan Steamship Company for eight years.

In 1925, Mr. Kline came to the Alta Loma School as principal, then in 1926 to Arcadia, where he led that school during the last two years

of its existence as a separate school district. After the Santa Fe School District consolidation, Mr. Kline ran for Galveston County School Superintendent in 1928, hoping to unseat O. F. Kennedy. Mr. Kline ran a strong campaign based on educational issues, but Kennedy was too well entrenched politically, and the attempt was a failure.

In 1928, Mr. Kline first leased, then bought, the Travis Store from Emma Travis, following the death of J. E. Travis. He moved the Arcadia Post Office equipment into the store, where it was to remain for 16 years. At first, Mrs. Travis sold dry goods from the upper floor of the store building, but following her removal to Houston, the store operated in the south part of the first floor, as a general grocery and dry goods business. Mrs. Kline's sister, **Miss Maude Kinchen**; assisted in managing the store for many years, slicing a pound of bacon or cutting a length of dress material as the trade required.

In the late 1930's, the store-home remained as it had been since its construction: two-storied, the right (residence) portion hip-roofed, with a narrow screened porch around the east and north sides of the first floor; the left (store) section flat-roofed, a shed porch across the front, the central entry door flanked by two glass show windows. The interior was dim, a long counter along the right side of the aisle in front of shelves of groceries, the meat counter at the back, the tiny post office in the southwest corner, shelves of goods along the windowless south wall, with all sorts of clothing, piece goods, and shoes displayed. Usually there was a teenage girl or a housewife clerking or sorting the clip-frame with all the little credit slips clipped to it. In 1949, Mr. Kline told a reporter that he had made a profit on the store each year of its operation, except possibly 1931-32. The yellow brittleness of some of the sheaves of charge slips might make one wonder.

Sometimes Mrs. Kline was wheeled out onto the screened porch in the mornings, and guarded the little concrete pool at the base of the

flagpole to the right of the walk. Woe to the unwary child who lingered more than a few seconds to stare at the goldfish. One birdlike cry was enough to send him on his way at a fast trot. How surprising then at the church dinner honoring high school seniors one year, to find place cards, each decorated with a sprig of watercolor wild flowers, laboriously and painfully executed by Mrs. Kline.

In 1943 Mr. Kline gave up the postmastership to the J. E. Travises' son-in-law, **Herman Stoneking**, who had moved to Arcadia in 1928 to manage the Travises' 24-acre fig orchard at the west end of Beriton. Mr. Stoneking died in 1944, and was succeeded by **Mrs. Errie Morgan**, wife of Lloyd Morgan, who had a barber shop in the little wooden row on the east side of Jackson, north of the highway. Mr. Kline built a small stuccoed tile home for the post office, just to the south of the store, at the front, with a connecting door allowing passage from one building to the other. This was the first time for the Arcadia Post Office to be housed in a free-standing building.



Figure 2. Arcadia Post Office, 1958
This post office was built on the south side of the Kline Store, 1940's
Post Mistress Ms. Morgan; assistant Leon Rush

In 1946 Mr. Kline was elected Justice of the Peace, a position he held for four years. A little office was appended to the southwest corner of the store, and a tiny courtroom was somehow squeezed in. Mr. Kline was an elder of the Christian Church, providing counsel in hard days that threatened its survival. Surprisingly, Miss Maude was the first of the family to die, then Mr. Kline in March 1957. Mrs. Kline outlived them both, spending her final days in a nursing facility in Houston.

Mrs. Morgan's was the longest tenure of Arcadia postmasters, 25 years. By now the postmaster's position was a fulltime job, and soon a postal assistant was required. After Mr. Kline's death the post office was moved to a new location in a building constructed by Arthur Autry across Jackson Avenue from the Travis/Kline building. The new quarters were occupied in September 1958. During these years there was a steady growth in population, and Rural Routes were organized for delivery in the Arcadia area. When Mrs. Morgan retired in 1969, she was succeeded by her former assistant, **Eural Leon Rush**. Upon his illness, **Dorothy Creppon McGinnes** became Officer in Charge, until the appointment of **Raymond Petrie**, who was the last person to hold the title of Arcadia Postmaster. Upon Petrie's departure in 1977, the impending incorporation of the City of Santa Fe, to include the townsites of Arcadia and Alta Loma, probably was the reason a new Arcadia postmaster was not appointed. **Dorothy McGinnes** served as Officer-in-charge at Arcadia, until her retirement in 1981. In the meantime, the Santa Fe incorporation had taken place in 1978, and it was a foregone conclusion that the two post offices would soon be one. In 1982, this came about with the designation of a Santa Fe Post Office (housed in the former Alta Loma Post Office). **Keith Tyner** became Postmaster. The former Arcadia Post Office operated as a station.

The Travis/Kline building had a checkered existence for a number of years, but was finally bought and renovated by **Jim Wood**, a leader in the Santa Fe incorporation movement,

and the first mayor of the new town. He operated it as a country restaurant, with little tables and lights on the former screened porch (now glass enclosed), and some tables in Mr. Kline's onetime Justice of the Peace courtroom. Mr. Wood perhaps counted on business from the numerous people who passed down Jackson Avenue on their way to and from activities at Runge Park, but there were not enough of them, and in the culture of the early 'eighties, good food and picturesqueness would not draw casual customers to drive a block from the Highway just to eat. The word *ambience* had not yet entered the popular vocabulary, and so the restaurant was

closed. Eventually it became once more a private residence.

In 1988 a large new Santa Fe Post Office was opened on Texas Hwy 6 between the former Alta Loma and Arcadia. The ZIP Codes for the two previous post offices were retained, and two sets of post office boxes were established, so patrons could maintain their longtime postal box numbers from the former post offices. A few still have the box numbers their grandparents had eighty years ago. But the *Arcadia* has disappeared. So 77517 is all that remains of Arcadia as a mailing address.



Figure 3. Dedication of Arcadia Post Office, April 25, 1959

Unidentified Boy Scout, Mrs. E. E. Morgan (postmistress), unidentified postal official, Leon Rush (postal assistant), Arthur 130Aury (building owner), Minnie Bell Travis (postal assistant)

The three homes of the Arcadia Post Office still face each other across Jackson Avenue, and on foggy nights perhaps exchange memories of the birth announcements, V-Mail, teenage SWAK envelopes,

telegrams, Dear John's, death notices, and picture postcards from exotic places like Seoul and Omaha that passed across their counters in the days when written communication was the way it was.

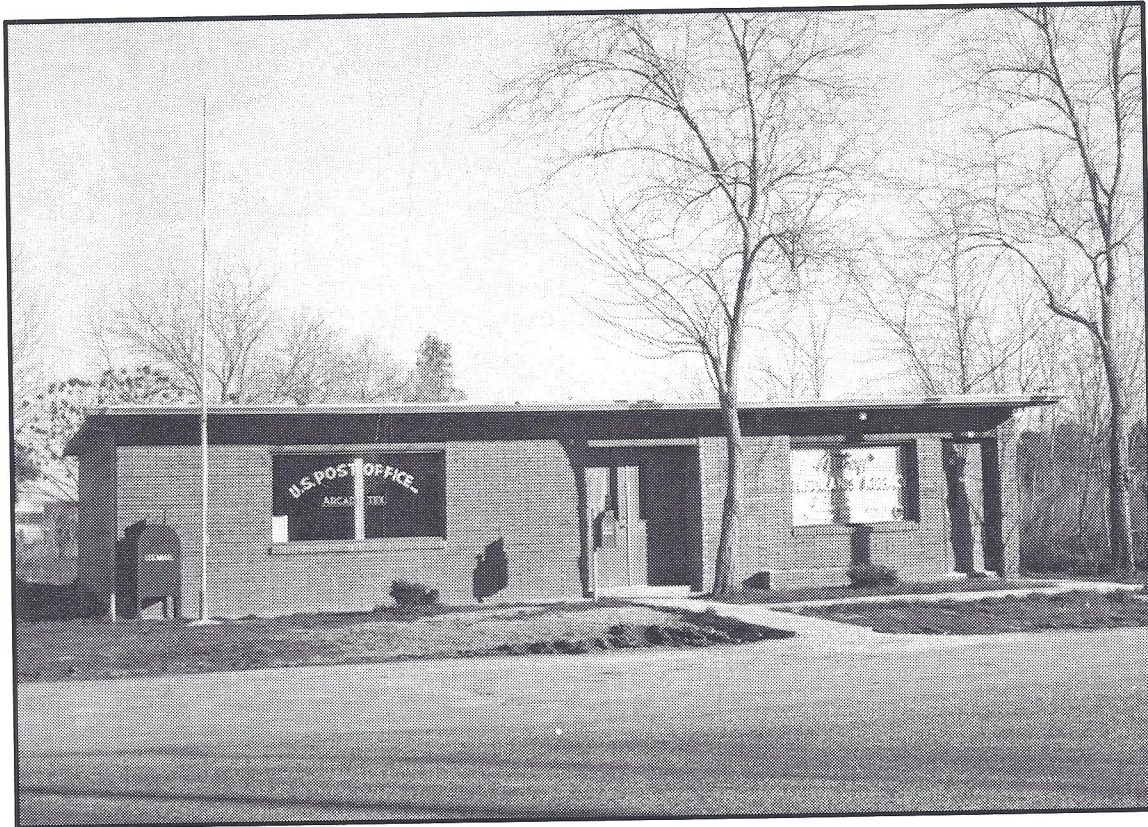


Figure 4. Last Arcadia Post Office, 1960's
East side of Jackson Avenue, across from Kline Store

You Can't Get There from Here



Figure 1. Jackson Avenue opens up new worlds with directions to Alvin and Galveston

When Arcadia was set up, the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe was its umbilical cord, connecting it with the world. All travel and transporting of goods and shipping crops to market depended on the railroad. The depot was the center of the life of the community. The main roads were graded, but poorly drained, and only a few had an oyster-shell surface. Endless stretches of mud confronted children walking to school in winter. They often waded across flooded pastures to escape losing their shoes in the muddy roads.

Soon after Alta Loma was established in 1894, its townsite was connected with Arcadia and Hitchcock by a county road, eventually shelled, following the north side of the railroad right-of-way and using the street platted closest to the rails as it reached each townsite. In Arcadia, this route utilized Ida Bee (now Texas Hwy 6), the only street that has lost its original name. At the east edge of the townsite, the road jogged toward the tracks at what is now the western driveway into the roadside park, and the driveway within the park marks the route of the county road.

The *GDN* reported, as early as Sep. 12, 1895: "Mr. R. L. Sims of this place has contracted for grading the county road from Arcadia to connect with the Clear Creek road." Clear Creek was the name of what is now League City. It is not possible to say at this time with certainty that this refers to Cemetery Road, extended east on what is now FM 517, then across to League City by way of Calder, including the section now closed. (Oil Field Road) It is possible that it refers to the famous Alleshouse Road, connecting with League City by way of Dickinson, or some route long abandoned and forgotten. Early maps of the Thaman subdivisions of the Mary Austin League indicate an "old wagon bridge" across Dickinson Bayou between Cemetery Road and today's FM 646, at what is now Avenue S, which exactly lines up with the southern part of Calder Road.

As more roads were paved with oyster shell, getting about became easier, but housekeeping became harder for housewives on the west or north sides of roads. As oyster shell was driven on, it was pulverized, producing a cloud of dust each time a vehicle passed. This

dust readily entered every open window, coating furniture with a fine white powder. Only a few blocks of "rock road" existed in Arcadia as recently as the late thirties, and the dust problem persisted until the final destruction of most oyster reefs in Galveston Bay brought about a change to the use of asphalt for streets and roads during the 1960's. By then, air conditioning was making atmospheric dust an irrelevance for many families.

When Algoa was founded in 1897, it was soon connected with Arcadia and Alvin with a wagon road. From Jackson Avenue in Arcadia, the road moved west along First Street and Maple, until it finally came into the Algoa townsite as Park Street. From there it ran along the tracks into the Alvin townsite. There, on Business 35, the first street going east on the north side of the railroad still is marked "Old Galveston Road."

All bridges from Galveston Island have had Virginia Point as their mainland terminus.

The submerged piers of the 1893 wagon bridge (destroyed in the 1900 Storm) can still be seen from the inbound causeway during winter low tides, about fifty yards to the south. Even before the wagon bridge was built, a few farmers marketed vegetables in Galveston by wagon. They would drive to Hitchcock, then across the prairie to Virginia Point, and camp for the night. At the morning low tide, they would ford the bay, drive into Galveston and sell vegetables, some to hotels, restaurants, and grocers, some by driving door-to-door on the streets of the city.

The county road followed North Railroad Avenue through the Hitchcock townsite until it finally reached what is now the present route of Texas Hwy 6 just east of the Texas City Terminal crossing. This section remained accessible until very recent years. After the destruction of the wagon bridge in 1900, no road connection to the island was available until the concrete causeway was opened in 1912. After this date, automobiles began to be common on the mainland.

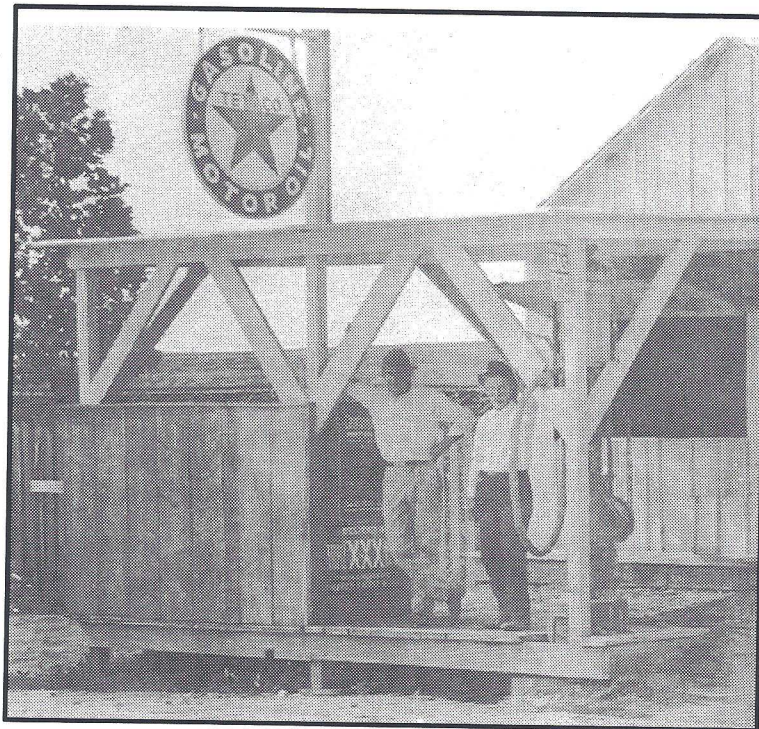


Figure 2. Motor oil and Triple XXX available in the early 20's



Figure 3. Ever wonder what a flivver was? Dub Palmo heads for Alvin in one, with the Farmers Co-op Society (The Feed Store) in the background, early 20's.

The Alta Loma-Dickinson road followed approximately the route of today's FM 646 from the Alta Loma townsite across Dickinson Bayou by a wagon bridge, then to the Dickinson townsite, by way of the route of present day FM 517. Today's FM 517 west from Dickinson is apparently a very old trail, as the Benson log cabin, in the Dickinson Bayou woods just past Cemetery Road, was one of the first homeplaces in the Dickinson community. West of FM 646, what is now FM 517 was still a shell road into the 1950's.

South of the Santa Fe, there were no places to connect with, as is the case still. At the south end of Birch, turning left took the rider to Powers Road, and eventually to Highland Road, the only visible reminder of the ill-fated Highland Farms. Today this road connects with 32nd

Street, which leads east to the north-south roads of the Alta Loma area. A right turn at the end of Birch leads to the southbound road (sometimes called Lem Bishop, sometimes Pearson) to the Pearson and Jensen places, in the woods near the headwaters of Hall's Bayou. Here the bank has a sandy slope to shallow water where the bayou could be forded, and families once picnicked and fished for little perch.

La Marque, Dickinson, and League City were developed along the line of the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railway (leased to associated lines), and their system of roads developed accordingly. Texas Hwy 3 (formerly US 75, and first developed in 1928 as Hwy 6), parallels these tracks. Today's Texas 146 follows the Southern Pacific tracks near the bayshore to Seabrook and La Porte.

Dickinson was reached from Alta Loma by way of the 646-517 link. To reach this route from Arcadia, Ark, the easternmost of the Arcadia townsite north-south streets, extended northward to the edge of the townsite, where it then turned right, and after a couple of hundred yards made a sharp left to the true north, reaching what is now called 4 1/2 St. At 4 1/2 and what is now Avenue S, F. M. Alleshouse operated a commercial nursery. Past his place the road continued east until it joined the Alta Loma-Dickinson road. The entire road from Ark to Alta Loma-Dickinson, even though it went in three directions, was called Alleshouse Road.

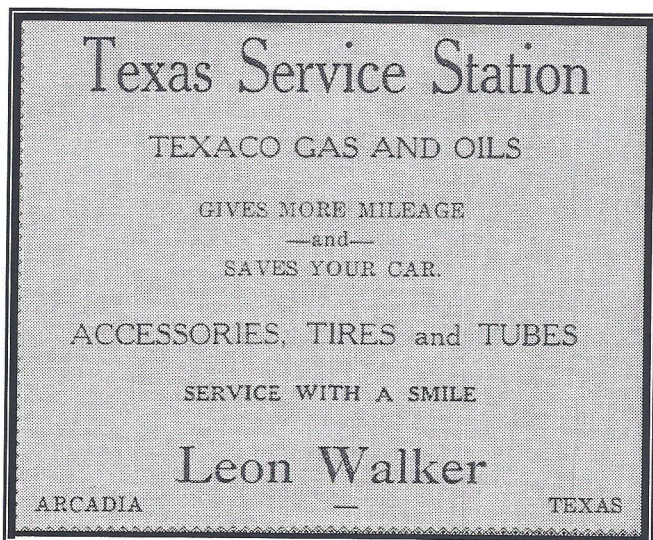


Figure 4.

Confusion began after Frank and Olive Alleshouse had long since gone back to Iowa, when in the 1930's a gasoline company map printed "Alleshouse" around the sharp kink at the road's southeastern extremity: "Alle" on the easterly section, "Shouse" on the part proceeding north. A generation later, when FM 1764 was built, its curve to join Texas 6 came just east of this sharp turn; and "Alle" was cut through to 1764 where John Botter built his house, and the northerly section (now extended far north from 4 1/2 St.), has become eternally "Shouse." Such are the accidents of history.

The coming of the motor car changed American life in many ways. Henry Ford's

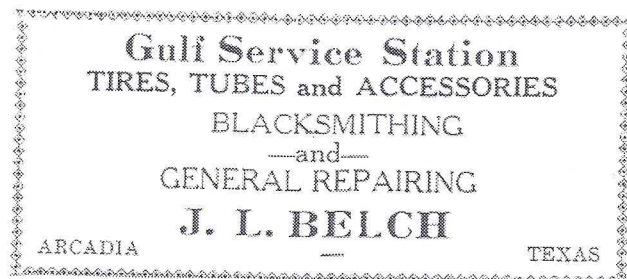


Figure 5.

Model T made it possible for masses of people to drive automobiles. A seemingly endless supply of oyster shell made it possible to create roads that would be passable in all kinds of weather, but driving was still an adventure. A driver never left home without all that was needed to remove a wheel, tire, and tube, patch the tube, inflate the tire and reinstall it on the rim and the wheel on the axle. There was enormous pressure from good-road organizations (not to mention automakers and gasoline providers) for states and, finally, the national government to provide a nationwide network of good roads.

In 1929, Texas highway officials decided to create a state highway over the Santa Fe route of the Alvin-Galveston road (then designated Hwy 58), to be named Texas Highway 38. It would separate from the Galveston-Dickinson-Houston highway (75/3) at the "Wye," (its spelling from the English river, its sound from its shape - "Y"). The route would roughly parallel the Santa Fe, but about twenty yards north of the old road. It would use the existing road in the Alta Loma, Arcadia, and Algoa townsites, with a widened right-of-way. In Hitchcock it would run two blocks north of the old route. As it neared Alvin, it was to veer away from the tracks a quarter of a mile.

Creating this highway was the biggest construction project in this part of the county until the building of Camp Wallace. It involved an immense amount of earthmoving in grading, filling in the area from the Wye to the Texas City Terminal crossing, building numerous concrete bridges over Highland Bayou and smaller streams and ditches, and moving or demolishing a number

of buildings. People would take their children to sit on the banks of dirt to watch the draglines and graders at work. The rock fence and two rock gardens at the Harry Long place on Elm Road were made by a construction worker who roomed at the Longs' and brought home a few hardened concrete splashings each day.

On April 22, 1931, the *Galveston Daily News* announced that all the grading for the new highway had been completed, except within the towns of Arcadia and Algoa, and that it was hoped contracts for paving would be let at the

upcoming highway commission meeting. The road would be two lanes of concrete, and all the bridges were concrete with heavy reinforced-concrete railings nearly five feet tall, about one foot from the driving lane. The new Santa Fe High School lost nearly half of its front lawn, and acquired one of the concrete barricades across its front. Completion of the project was announced April 15, 1932 (*The Alvin Sun*), with the further announcement that Hwy 38 would be extended through Brazoria County to Fort Bend County, and Hwy 35 would be developed between Alvin and Houston.

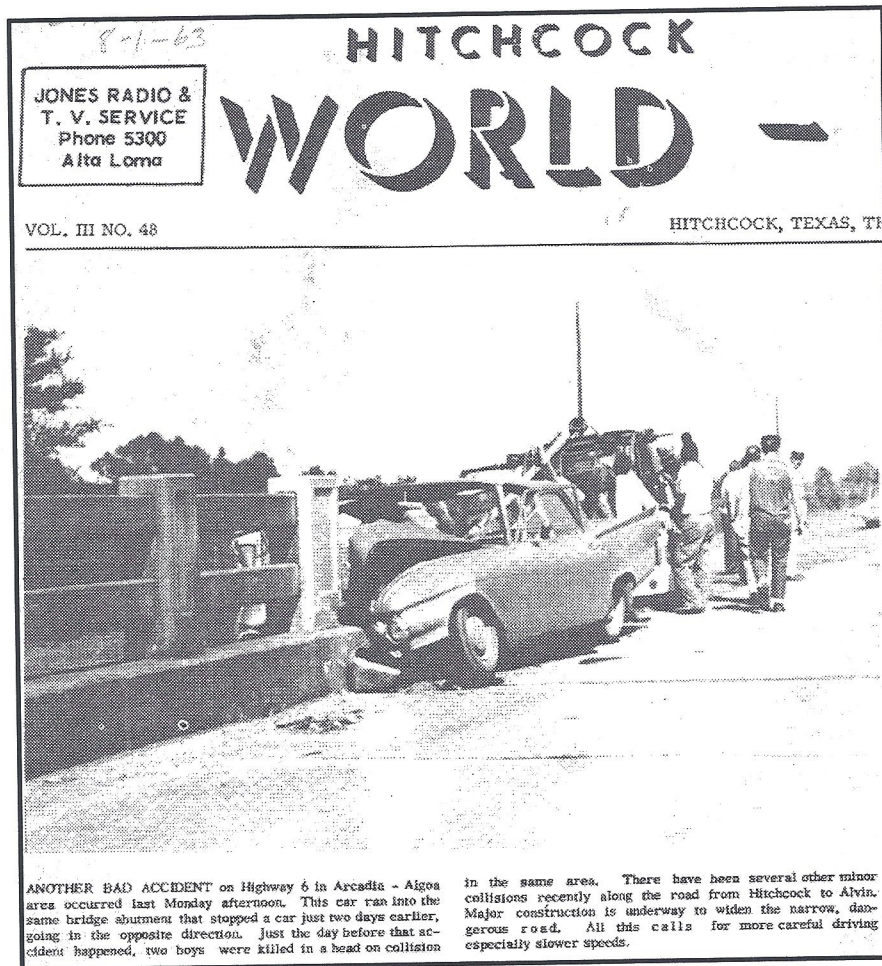


Figure 6. The engineering of Highway 6 left something to desire—space to dodge the concrete barricades at every ditch and intersection.

Following the completion of the new highway 38, a project was undertaken that, if it had been completely carried through, would have created a magnificent sweep of greenery. Funds were made available to plant trees and shrubs along the new highway, beginning at the Brazoria County line and moving eastward as long as the money lasted. Where the money came from, no one knows. But along each side of the highway, along the property line, this plan was carried out: a live oak tree, a watermelon-red crepe myrtle, a newly imported marvel, the Chinese Tallow tree, another crepe myrtle, and then the pattern was repeated.

The live oaks are said to have been supplied by Holbert's nursery, the tallows from Teas Nursery in Houston. The pattern proceeded along the highway through the townsites of Algoa and Arcadia, past the Santa Fe High School, and ended just about as it reached the Alta Loma townsite. Care of the plantings was said to be a WPA project. But as the war came on, care ceased and it was every plant for itself. As time passed, brush grew up and obscured the pattern, but it survived, nearly intact, until comparatively recent years. Then just as the oaks were finally maturing, wires and cables began to be strung along the right-of-way, and trees were mutilated wholesale. Then driveway construction for homes and businesses took its toll. Nevertheless, several hundred oaks and crepe myrtles survive, enough to indicate what might have been. The first tree at the Brazoria County line still stands, and the last ones on the east that can be positively identified are the two in front of Guaranty Bank.

The development of a paved highway system, bringing suddenly-increased mobility, changed life in this area immensely. A number of young women studied business courses Draughon's Business College in Galveston by the middle 'Twenties, some commuting by train or the milk truck, some boarding in town, and by 1928, there was a commuter bus in operation between Alvin and Galveston, transporting workers to jobs in offices and other businesses there. In those pre-computer days, firms like

American National Insurance Company had enormous numbers of office workers. Those workers lucky enough to have cars often carried several friends to work, to help with expenses. Suddenly it was practical to live in Arcadia and make a living elsewhere. The opening of the Pan-American refinery at Texas City in 1935 marked the beginning of the commuter age for blue-collar workers.



Figure 7.

It is also difficult to realize how the coming of the superhighway has further changed American life. For twenty years after the opening of Hwy 38/6, travel to Houston from Arcadia would involve driving to Alvin, joining Texas 35 through Pearland, entering Houston on Telephone Road, then reaching downtown by way of Leeland Avenue. The 1940's saw public bus transportation reach its peak, before a slow decline to virtually nothing, during the late 50's and 60's. At the height of World War II, military bases and defense industries resulted in there being probably about 18 buses daily each way on the Galveston-Alvin-Houston route.

Almost immediately after the end of World War II, construction began on the first expressway built in Texas, what came to be called The Gulf Freeway, connecting downtown Houston with Galveston. A route was chosen through undeveloped territory, about halfway between US Hwy 75 (now the Texas 3 route through Dickinson) and Texas Hwy 6. It was to join the other two highways where they met at the "Y," converting it into a "W." When the Gulf Freeway opened in 1952, it foreshadowed what was to come in the 1960's all over the country as the Interstate Highway system came into being.

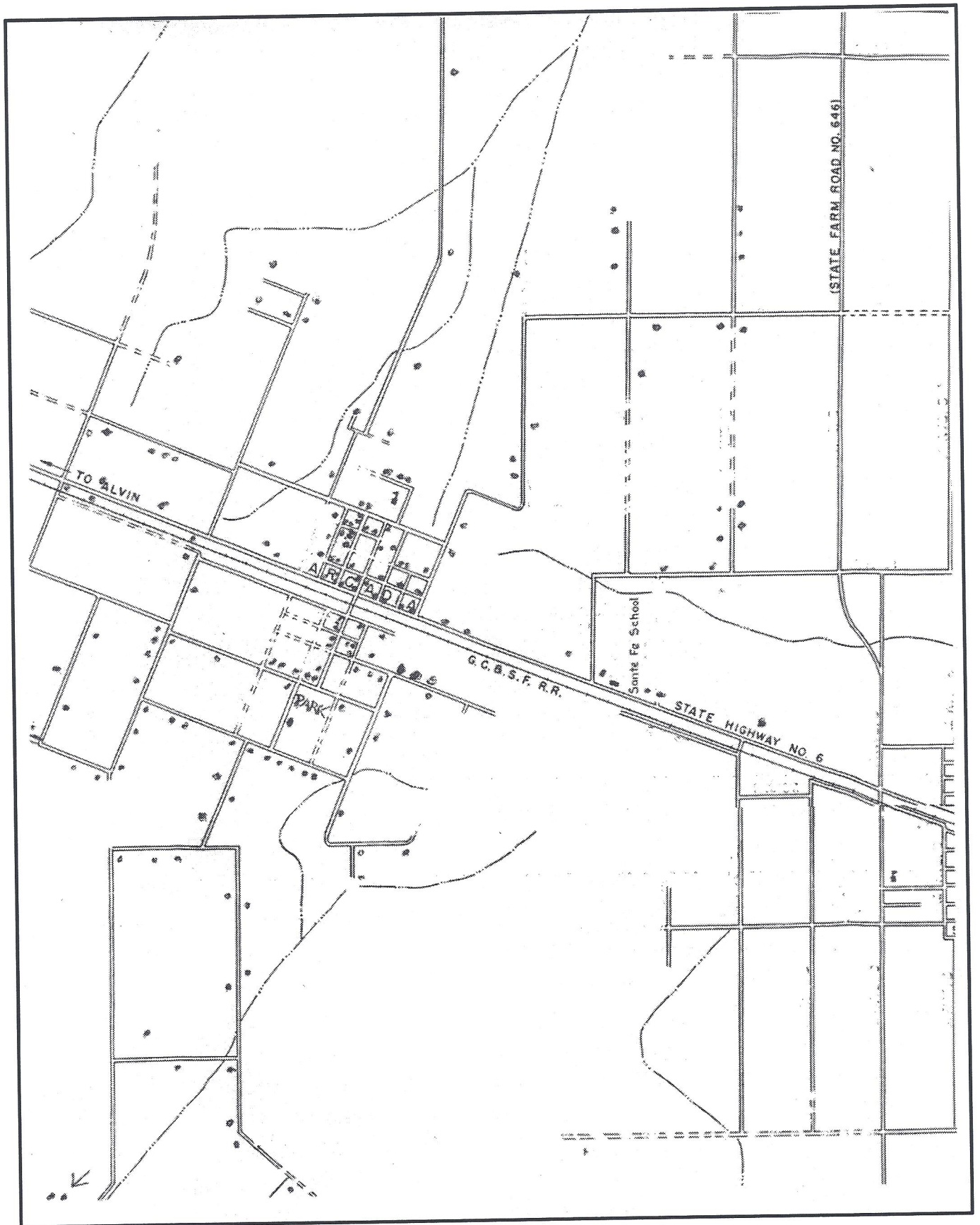


Figure 8. Arcadia in 1943, showing unpaved and unopened roads

Locally, the most immediate effect of the freeway was the opening of the first shopping mall in Texas, Gulfgate, on the Gulf Freeway at what was then the edge of Houston. This was to revolutionize shopping patterns, remake the face of America, and lead to the deaths of the downtowns of most American cities. It was the death knell too for the small owner-operated businesses in small towns and country places. But it sure made it nice to get about!

The final step in the development of local transportation was the growth of the Texas Farm-to-Market road system. This was justified as a means of expediting the marketing of farm products, and thus benefiting rural areas. But it quickly became a second state highway system. Locally it had two manifestations. First of these was the development of the Alta Loma/Dickinson

road into FM 646, and its extension southward to join FM 2004, which was extended to Brazoria County and Freeport. FM 1764 was built through undeveloped land and connected Texas Hwy 6 from the eastern edge of the Arcadia townsite with the main entrance to Texas City. Few farm products have been taken to market over it, but many customers for Texas City businesses.

These projects as they continue to be developed deeply affect the nature of the community, making some places more desirable for homes, destroying some areas as suitable homeplaces, making little fortunes for certain businesses, while putting other businesses out of business. This principle seems to have been dimly perceived over the horizon during the 1999 discussions of routes of the impending Grand Parkway.

Father, Dear Father, Come Home with Me Now

The increased right-of-way needed for the building of Highway 38 (now 6) brought about the demolition of the old Spencer & Owens Store. The concurrent repeal of Prohibition in December 1933 made possible the open sale of beer, leading to the development of the tavern (or beer joint, depending on the point of view. A juke box might elevate the status to honkytonk.) Materials from the Spencer & Owens building were used to construct Uncle Charlie's Place, fronting the highway just east of the Spencer & Owens corner, with a shelled parking area to the west, and a green lawn to the north, centered with a huge, magnificent pecan tree. **Uncle Charlie** was **Charles Daura**, one of the clan of Dauras living

children and filled her house with relatives and boarders. It was a tradition for over twenty years for the local school teachers to room at Palmo's. Sometimes as many as 16 family members and paying guests slept under the spreading gambrel roof.

Several members of the Daura clan operated ice-cream and soft drink businesses from time to time: sometimes on one side of the road, sometimes on the other. In the 30's **Bobby Webber** had a confectionery on the west side of Jackson between the highway and the tracks. But it was Uncle Charlie's Place that endured the longest, with the greatest visibility and impact.



Figure 1. Uncle Charlie's

with their widowed sister, Mrs. Palmo. Perhaps because their nieces and nephews (Palmos and Webbers) were so numerous, all of these elders were uncle and aunt to the entire community (Uncle Pat, Uncle Joe, Aunt Nettie, etc.), except Mrs. Palmo, who, out of respect to her status as hardworking matriarch, was never referred to as anything but "Mrs. Palmo." From her husband's death in 1913, she finished raising her twelve

Uncle Charlie's was a gable fronted frame building, with a shed-roof porch across the front and lean-to additions along each side, and eventually an improbable gabled addition across the back. It served as an all-male pub, with more emphasis on the beer and less on the food. In the near-darkness of the interior, local men young and old whiled away the hours visiting and pulling tips (the Depression Era equivalent of the

Lottery), before going out into the bright light of the Depression. In the meantime, their wives and children shoveled the manure.

Across the highway from Uncle Charlie's, at the Jackson Avenue corner, another establishment grew and grew, with a gable or two, some lean-to additions, a flat-roof wing, a Wild West false front, and for a time a drive-under canopy across the front, and even a gasoline pump. There was a succession of proprietors, and the level of decorum fluctuated. A would-be satirist writing in the *Alvin Sun* (September 24, 1937), described a case in Judge Edwin Bruce's Justice of the Peace Court: "The trial of the operator of an Arcadia café charged with permitting a disturbance of the peace on the Saturday night before had drawn a large portion of the residents of this predominantly dairying community to the scene. Although the preponderance of evidence was largely to the

only would be told that he was not sworn. Queried as to his frequency at the place he exclaimed that he spent most of his idle time there and that he was very familiar with its decorum, which he stressed was good. The cross-examination of this witness developed that his capacity for beer was 20 bottles or thereabouts in a stated period, but was accompanied by a very positive statement that he never "got drunk." Apparently pre-determined in his action Justice Bruce fined the pretty café hostess-operator \$15 and costs, and accompanied his decision with the statement that if called before him again the fine would be hiked to the two century figure."

About 1941, **Mack Bulls** and his wife, **Elizabeth Bishop**, closed their refreshment stand across the ditch from the high school, moved uptown to the crossing, and the **Arcadia Café** was born. An ad in the 1941 Dairy Day program for "Mack's Café" must be this business in transition.



Figure 2. Mrs. Mack's

effect that the disturbance complained of was out of the building and some distance away, Attorney Jackson was pilloried by the objections of the prosecution. One witness brought in by the defense was related to the complainant, and reluctantly came forward expostulating and with hands upraised shouting that he did not wish to harm anyone and that he was going to tell nothing but the truth. So vehement was he that the truth

A competitor in Arcadia (Is this Webber's?) advertised, "Gulf Lunch Room, Nothing short but the price." After Mr. Bulls' death Mrs. Mac and her family continued to operate the café for a number of years, with more emphasis on the food than previously. It became a sort of family pub, with a pool table, besides the conventional marble tables, slots, etc., of the era. Children came and went buying bus tickets, and workers stopped in

for lunch and supper. But there were plenty of stools for the regulars who spent the day. And the mixed clientele produced better entertainment. One time after two women got into a tussle that ended up with both rolling on the floor, one was heard to remark, "I could of whipped her if I'd had on my underwear."

The addictive mechanism of alcohol was understood not at all in the pre-war world. A drunk was a figure of fun or an example of moral failure. *Alcoholism* was not even a word in the lexicon. Many who today would be carted off to a detox center, dried out, and placed on mood-elevators, just drank themselves to death, as an escape from their depression at the Depression.

*There is a tavern in the town,
And there my true love sits him down,
And drinks his wine and ale so merrily,
And never, never thinks of me.*

American Folk Song



Figure 3. The Bush Family
Zula, Willie Paul, Jack, Eugene. *Courtesy Verda Newlin*



Figure 4. Hala and Jim Newlin; Julie and Chester Newlin. *Courtesy Verda Newlin*



Figure 5. Aaberg Family
Row 1. Quentin, John K., Minnie, Zanetta
Row 2. Vanelda, Harald, Vera. *Courtesy Verda Newlin*

Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? The Great Depression

The spread of the automobile created a whole new retail industry – gasoline. By 1920 there were gasoline pumps set up at a number of stores and other businesses along what was to become a highway. One or two pumps could be put up at comparatively little cost, and a mechanically minded young man could put up a canopy and have a “service” station, pumping gas and doing the kind of repairs that could be handled with a few tools. In those days, you really did “pump” gas. The tall cylinder had a

Jackson, and looks to be from the early Twenties. A pump is seen on the corner of Jackson in the mid-Thirties, and **George Laine** had a Gulf station at Downey by then. Also by this time **Fred Rush** was dispensing Texaco at a little white building with two brick pillars at the northeast corner of the highway and Peck, in the corner of the yard of a residence. The 1941 Dairy Show Program has an ad for a Humble Service Station at Arcadia, with “Friendly Service.” Possibly this is **Jasper (Jap) Unger**’s station, on



Figure 1. Depression Christmas, 1933. W. C. Shannon Place

vertical handle which you pulled back and forth, while the golden gasoline gushed into the glass upper section, up to the proper mark for the sale. Then you released it to run into the car tank.

A picture exists of a one-room station with a canopy, selling Texaco gasoline and Triple XXX Root Beer. It is located a block or so east of

the northeast corner of Scott and Hwy 6. During the War years, **Bobby Webber**’s family dispensed Sinclair gasoline at the southwest corner of the highway and Jackson. Of course, not all of these stations were active at the same time, and when gasoline rationing was imposed after Pearl Harbor, total sales declined precipitously.



Figure 2. Making Hay, early Thirties

Charlie Powers, Joe Gilbert, Durley Holloway, Harry Holloway, Guy E. Moore, Frank Moore, Guy I. Moore, Ernest Moore



Figure 3. Ladies of Beaver Family, 1930's

Lois Meek (Mrs. Koy) Beaver, Ada (Mrs. Ruben) Beaver, Mineola Beaver (Mrs. Jim) Gibson, Cora Beaver Spear, Unknown, Unknown, Marie Moore (Mrs. Gay) Beaver, Bertha Walker (Mrs. Slover) Beaver



Figure 4. Uncle Charlie presides at the bar.

E. C. Murdoch was in Arcadia as early as the 1910 Census, listed as merchant. By 1920 the Census listed him as merchant, barber. He owned the wooden building at the curbline on the east side of Jackson, with his barber shop in the north end. Apparently he conducted a soft-drink business at some time during these decades. In the 1930's **Lloyd Morgan** bought the building and operated the barber shop there, and later in a small prefabricated building to the south. **Shorty McLaren** operated a barbershop out of a curved-roof cart with high wheels. In the Thirties he had it located beside E. Q. Rogers' store in Alta Loma, but after that burned in 1937, he moved his cart to Arcadia, first on the grounds of Uncle Charlie's Place, then directly across the highway on the east side of



Figure 5. Sunday afternoon, early 1930's.
Della Meek, Minnie Belle DeGroot, Lois St. John, Hazel Stoneking, Ann St. John

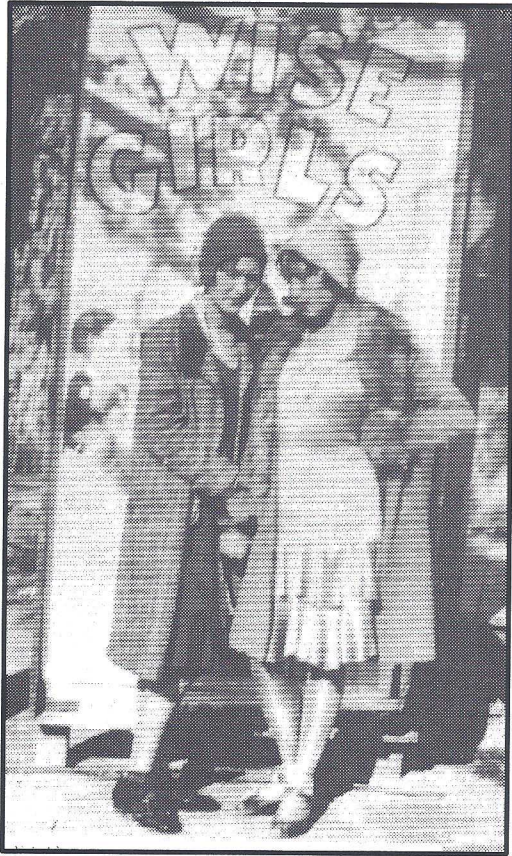


Figure 6. Claudine Rogers and Hazel Stoneking clown it up before the Arcadia mini-billboard for the Alvin Theater

Mrs. Mac's. The cart had a narrow door in the end, one chair for waiting, and just enough room behind the barber's chair for Shorty to stand and work, a small square window behind him providing light.

Several years before the Stock Market bubble burst in 1929, the state of American agriculture had already become depressed. Prices paid to farmers were low, and markets for local crops continued to shrink under the impact of the rapid development of the Rio Grande Valley, and the lack of strong marketing organizations in this area. The dairy industry grew, after the recovery from the hoof-and-mouth epidemic. While a few families had been fully dependent on dairying, many farmers had always kept some dairy cows and shipped milk by train to Galveston. Attempts to better organize the production and marketing of milk were made as early as 1923 when **The Galveston County Milk Producers Association** was formed. But it was the organization of the **Dairy Farmers Cooperative Association** that ushered in the golden era of dairying in Galveston County. *The Galveston Daily News* (May 2, 1932) reported a meeting held in Dickinson on the previous day, in which 107 dairymen formed the co-op, with the aim of "stabilization of the Galveston milk market through control of the supply." The previous week, the Galveston City Commission had adopted an ordinance limiting the issuance of permits to supply milk to shippers within a 25-mile radius of the city, creating an assured market for the co-op members.

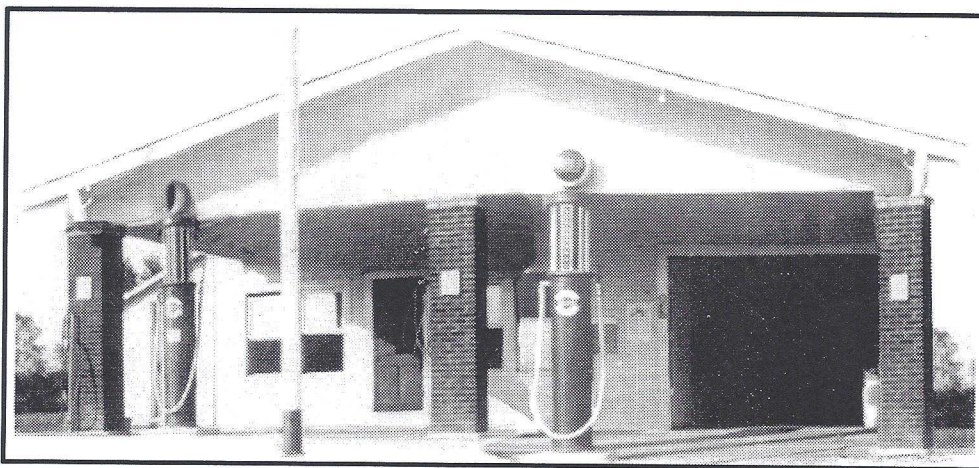


Figure 7. George Laine's Gulf Station, Hwy 6 at Downey, late Thirties

Soon a hollow-tile building was erected by the association at Arcadia, on the northwest corner of Terry and Highway 6, one block west of Jackson. The building grew to a U configuration, with loading docks on the east and west sides. Cans of milk still warm from the cows were unloaded morning and evening onto the east platform, placed on a metal conveyor moving them inside, where the milk was weighed, tested for bacteria and butterfat content, the cans steam-sterilized and sent back to the dock to be picked up, the milk chilled and sent by a fleet of trucks to the dairies in Galveston. There it was pasteurized, bottled, and distributed to retail outlets and restaurants. Model and Star dairies were the largest of these operations, but there were about a half-dozen in all.

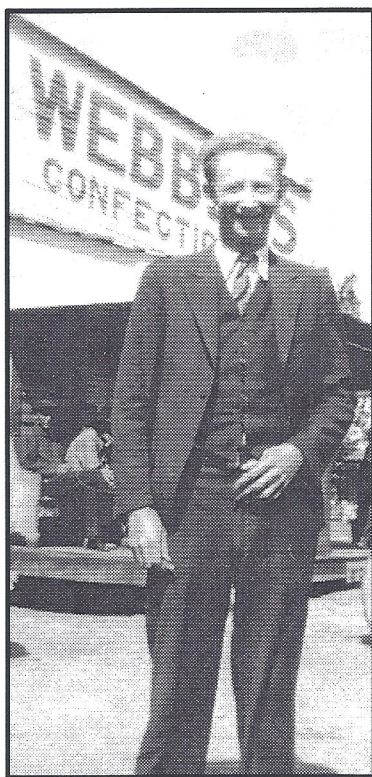


Figure 8. T. C. Dude Gunn at Webber's Confectionery, west side of Jackson, between Hwy 6 and the railroad.

From this same era came the **Farmers Cooperative Association**, which built a feed and grocery store across the highway from the milk plant, adjacent to the railroad tracks. The corporate structures of the two were related.

Early managers included **Lem Bishop, H. P. Hervey, Roy Sturm, Henry Schulze**, and during the War, **J. A. Moore and Roy Lambden**. The feed operation was entered from a loading dock on the north side of the building. The grocery store entrance was at the southeast corner of the building. The two sections were connected with an interior doorway. Many food items went at a discount – nickel candy bars were four cents, which represented a saving in that day.

As general economic conditions worsened, local farm families were more and more dependent on their own resources. There were no jobs for the sons to enter, no money to buy land to



Figure 9. A glimpse of Roy Sturm's store, end of the Thirties

set up new farms, but families with a little land and a few animals could be surprisingly self-sufficient. Whole milk was plentiful for household use, if it was not sold. Housewives churned butter, that they sold or bartered to other households. The skim milk was allowed to clabber, then suspended over pans in the yard for the whey to drain out for the chickens, while the clabber was used to make cheese. Cattle furnished veal, liver and beef. Surplus eggs could be traded for other items. A sugar cane patch yielded stalks that could be milled by Mr. Still at Alta Loma for a share of the juice, the rest boiled down into syrup. A hog, fed refuse of all kinds, provided bacon, pork chops, ham, sausage, liver, lard, hog's head cheese – as was said, everything was used but the squeal. Orchards produced a variety of fruits, especially pears in the orchards left over from the pear boom. Fruit was eaten

fresh, or made up into preserves and jellies for year-round use. A corn patch yielded roasting ears, whole kernel for canning, and dried corn to be used for hominy, or ground "on the shares" for cornmeal. Wild berry vines, especially dewberries, as well as strawberries from domestic patches, provided the makings for cobblers and preserves. Surplus vegetables and greens

was reserved for things not possible to produce from the ground: kerosene for lamps, coffee, salt for curing meats, shoes, belts, hats, woven materials for clothing, a few dollars to pay on long-overdue medical bills, and maybe, but not likely, a few dollars to pay the taxes. Ducks, doves, and quail were abundant in season – provided there was a little cash for shells. Fishing



Figure 10. When a lady took her daughters shopping in Galveston in the Thirties, if called for hat, purse, and maybe even gloves.

Nettie Marie. Blanche Powers. Iris. Zada. Deloha

augmented the diet, and many a hot summer day was spent canning the excess for the winter. Children could not complain of nothing to do – there was an endless supply of peas to be shelled and beans to be snapped, corn to be shucked and de-silked.

Whatever could be grown, made, or bartered for, provided most of the diet, but what cash could be secured by crop or product sales;

trips to the Bay were not made just for recreation. Those with land, skills, stamina and spunk pulled through. Those who didn't have those essentials, suffered. Especially hard was the situation of widowed mothers without access to home gardens. No bank deposit insurance, no Social Security Survivors' Benefits, no disability insurance, no unemployment benefits – no nothing. One local mother had to send her children to be raised in the Galveston Orphanage