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POPULAR MECHANICS MAGAZINE

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See Page
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The merging of Ochiltree, TX and Gray, OK caught the attention of Popular Mechanics magazine, which highlighted the historic move to the new town of Perryton on its February 1920 cover. The magazine also wrote a short story about the event inside.

THE PERRYTON HERALD

Section B, Page One
Thursday, August 22, 2019

Building a town from the ground up

Most communities spend years developing into incorporated towns and cities, but Perryton became a city overnight by the merging of two communities — Ochiltree, Texas and Gray, Oklahoma.

The Perryton townsite was laid out by the Santa Fe railway people as part of their overall development along the new line from Shattuck, OK, on the east into Hansford County on the west.

Thus, Perryton is one of the few cities of the country that has an actual birthday — Aug. 22, 1919.

Of course, plans were made for a town at this point on the Santa Fe some time before this birthday. Citizens of both Ochiltree and Gray were given an opportunity to secure lots for both business and residential purposes as an inducement to move homes and business houses to the new townsite.

Perryton was laid out on what was a rise, bordered by a small lake to the south and a smaller one on the north, separated by the Santa Fe grade for the rails. The early surveyors believed they were putting a townsite on a spot that would drain well, and it did until Perryton outgrew early boundaries.

Judge George M. Perry is given credit for the exceptionally wide Main Street in

Perryton. When the Santa Fe crew was laying out the townsite, Judge Perry saw the proposed narrow Main Street and said, "Boys, if there's anything we've got plenty of out here, it's space so let's lay out a street that is wide enough to take care of the future," and they did.

When the first residents came to the townsite, there was only one building, the home of Judge and Mrs. J.M. Grigsby. This frame house was used by the Santa Fe crews and was bought by Judge Grigsby as a homesite in the new town.

This home, located at the corner of Main and Fifth avenue, was moved from the back of the lot to the front of the lot when the townsite was formed.

The first residents of Perryton used the well at the Grigsby home as their only source of water. W.M. Freeman delivered water by the barrel to customers in those early days of Perryton.

The moving of the two communities was quite an adventure. Put to use were large steam tractors and heavy moving equipment. Houses and business buildings were jacked up, put on wheels and moved to their new home.

It wasn't accomplished overnight, either. In fact,

homes were still being moved to the Perryton townsite in the spring of 1920.

Those early buildings didn't have much of a plumbing problem because there was no plumbing. It wasn't until later that water was piped to homes and businesses and it wasn't until November 1921 that the owners of the first water and electric system, Fremont Mead and C.E. Whippo, secured a franchise from the city.

The original power plant, water well and tower was located on a site which is now the southeast corner of Main and Brillhart.

The city bought the power plant and water plant in September 1923 for \$33,000. The city immediately began building a new electric plant in the northwest part of town, also putting in water storage and new wells.

In 1926, the city sold the electric and water systems to the Inland Utilities Co., doing this by means of a special election which roused bitter feelings that persisted for years. Sale price was \$60,000 to the company.

The land which became the Perryton townsite was owned at the time by Harry F. Purcell, owner of the Ochiltree Eagle, a newspa-

per published at Ochiltree. He bought this 320 acre tract of land and "moved to the farm" around 1916. It is reported that he paid \$8 an acre for the 320 acres and sold it for \$50 an acre about 15 months later.

Perryton was originally planned with a courthouse square, like most towns of that era and the original survey map shows a square at the south end of Main Street, where the courthouse is located. However, county officials reconsidered on this, and traded property so that the courthouse could occupy the block where it is located, and left room for Main Street to continue without detouring around the square.

On Aug. 22, 1919, a large crowd gathered to observe the founding of Perryton and among the most memorable events on the town's birthday was the arrival of the first train ever run into Perryton and Ochiltree County.

This day also marked the beginning of the sale of town lots. No public auction was held, although lots were purchased at private sale.

Only four buildings dotted the townsite on this opening day. These were a new frame building, built and occupied by Perryton National Bank and located on the corner next to the present-

day Ellis Theatre; an old sheet iron building moved by W.E. Lilly from Gray and later occupied by the Bryan Food Store; the W.W. McLarty home located south of what is now Whigham Park; and the J.M. Grigsby home, located at the southwest corner of Fifth and Main.

A list of reservations for business and residential lots was published in the Aug. 22, 1919 edition of the Ochiltree County Herald and showed 62 business lots and 83 residence lots reserved at that time.

The original town consisted of 43 city blocks and the town ended at Seventh Avenue on the south, Cedar street on the east, Grinnell street on the west and Brillhart avenue on the north.

On May 8, 1920, the City of Perryton was incorporated through an election of citizens and officials were elected. These were C.E. Forbes, mayor; C.E. McLarty, F.P. Rogers, J.H. Norwood, J.L. Dodson and J.M. Willey as aldermen.

These new city fathers had their work cut out for them because their city needed everything in the way of city services, from sidewalks to street lights to fire protection.

They had no official home for the first seven years of the city council's existence. They first met in the First National Bank building, later rented a room in the Farmer and Stockmen State Bank, then met in the C.E. Forbes garage building before the first City Hall was built in 1927.

This first city council passed a thick volume of ordinances providing for rules and regulations of the council, prohibiting nuisances, intoxication, disorderly conduct, bawdy houses or places of prostitution, gambling, resisting arrest, keeping and harboring unlicensed dogs, and set a speed limit of 12 miles per hour for the driving of horses and motor vehicles inside the city limits.

The city council also set up enabling legislation which would eventually provide for a water system, electric plant, sewer system, telephone system and natural gas system.

By 1921, Perryton had a water and light plant, flour mill, five grain elevators and three banks.

A city bond election in the amount of \$7,000 was held in 1921 to build sidewalks and improve streets, this modest amount being sufficient at the time.

When the second birthday came around on Aug. 22, 1921, Perryton billed itself as "The Wonder Town of the Plains," and with good reason. At that time the population was estimated at 1,500 people, it had a city light and water plant, a telephone system, three banks, two mills, an ice plant and five elevators.

It was in 1922 that Perryton observed another milestone by getting a 24-hour light system. Until then, the lights went off at midnight, and the "night owls" had to depend upon coal oil lamps or candles for their illumination.

The city fathers were thinking ahead all the time, and in September 1922, employed an engineer to make a survey for a city water and sewer system.

In December a bond issue of \$110,000 carried by a margin of 2-1 to buy the water and light plant from Public Utilities for \$33,000 and use the rest for other

improvements.

Bids were opened for a new water tower in February 1923, and Pittsburg-Desmones of Dallas was low bidder for \$9,600. This went to build a new tower at what is now Main and Brillhart.

In March, the city bought a new Fairbanks Morse light plant, with a capacity of 150 horsepower, for \$13,875. Current was turned on for new Main Street streetlights on Aug. 22, 1923, also some street lights in the residential area.

During these first years of city history, there was no jail for prisoners. In March 1924, the city voted to build a jail with Ochiltree County buying the cell blocks and interior furnishings in exchange for keeping prisoners. The city purchased a lot at the rear of the courthouse for this purpose and built a small jail.

The Ochiltree County Herald announced that the bumper wheat crop of 1926 had resulted in 47 new homes being built.

The Devlin Engineering Co. of Dallas completed their survey of a sewer system and reported to the city council that a new system could be built in Perryton for \$70,000. The \$70,000 sewer bond election carried by a vote of 102-49.

By July of 1927, things were going well in Perryton. The Herald reported that these things were under construction: new high school building, new sewer system, new water well, new city hall, water storage reservoir, central power plant, many new business houses and new homes.

The county commissioners announced plans to build a new \$100,000 brick courthouse without a bond election. The county was in good enough financial shape that this construction could be financed through warrants instead of voting bonds.

During 1927 there were 12 new brick businesses constructed in Perryton.

Natural gas was planned for Perryton when a franchise was granted to East Plains Co. of Amarillo to serve the community. It was to be necessary to lay 63 miles of pipeline and serve Perryton, Waka and Farnsworth as well as Spearman. Rate was \$1 per 1,000 cubic feet with reduction to 60 cents per 1,000 cubic feet.

The new sewer lines for Perryton residents were placed in service on Jan. 12, 1928, without fanfare. Yet this was a major milestone for citizens of Perryton, most of whom had used an outdoor privy all their lives but now could enjoy indoor plumbing due to the new sewer system.

By 1928, there were 902 cars and trucks registered in Ochiltree County.

City voters approved a \$48,000 street improvement bond issue in 1929 by a vote of 261-19. A natural gas contract was signed on March 21, 1929 with William Horowitz and Associates of Ft. Worth to bring natural gas to Perryton.

City mail delivery was assured when residents finished building sidewalks and putting numbers on their houses.

As the decade drew to a close, the Herald pointed out that 1929 was a banner year with \$1,000,000 spent on city improvements. This included 150 new homes, new Hotel Perryton, new Ellis Theatre, Texas-Louisiana power plant, 23 1/2 blocks of brick paving, new gas mains and a 6,000,000 bushel wheat crop in the bin.



MOVING DAY — Huge steam powered tractors pulled building from Ochiltree, TX and Gray, OK to the new townsite of Perryton. Pictured is the Panhandle Lumber Co. building on its way to a new location in Perryton.



The past 100 years have produced more dramatic changes in personal lifestyles than at any other comparable time in history, and the rules for living in 2016 are certainly a far cry from those that applied at the turn of the century.

The changing standard applies to all phases of our society, even to those who teach our children. And while we still demand better behavior from our teachers than we demand of our neighbors or ourselves, the rules have relaxed considerably from those set down in the Buckeye Farm News for teachers in 1915.

- You will not marry during the term of your contract.
- You are not to keep company with men.
- You must be home before the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. unless attending school functions.
- You may not loiter downtown in any of the ice cream stores.
- You may not travel beyond the city limits unless you have the permission of the chairman of the board.
- You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother.
- You may not smoke cigarettes.

- You may not dress in bright colors.
- You may not, under any circumstances, dye your hair.
- You must wear at least two petticoats.
- Your dresses must not be any shorter than two inches above the ankle.
- To keep the schoolroom neat and clean, you must: sweep the floor at least once daily; scrub the floor at least once a week with hot soapy water; clean the blackboards at least once a day; and start a fire at 7 a.m. so the room will be warm by 8 a.m.

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OPENING DAY OF PERRYTON — This historic picture shows some of the crowd that gathered on the townsite of Perryton on Aug. 22, 1919, to officially open the new town. Festivities on this opening day were highlighted by the arrival of the first passenger train, the arrival of an airplane (which crashed, killing a passenger), and a look at lots on the new townsite.

Gray, OK was also a thriving community

Like Ochiltree, Gray, OK was a prosperous community, with over 500 in population.

The first store in Gray, a general merchandise, was owned by A.W. Kuykendall. As the town grew, another general store was opened by George Ragsdale.

Other businesses were Gray Mercantile, owned by John Just, J.H. Neufeld and Ray Ravenscroft, and Plainview Hardware owned by Just, Neufeld and Sam Hergert.

Gray also boasted a bank, First State Bank. When the town moved to Perryton, it became known as Perryton National Bank.

People from miles around came by horse and buggy to trade at Gray. There were very few fences and no maintained roads, so there were trails from every direction leading to Gray.

At one time, the Barnum and Bailey Circus came to Gray, and Buster Brown, originator of the Buster Brown haircut, and his dog Tige came to advertise Buster Brown shoes.

Saturdays were big trade days, and Saturday activities included adult baseball games, basketball games and horse and mule racing.

The Gray Community Church was also a hub of activity, hosting not only

church services but various functions.

Gray also had a crude telephone system. Before telephone wires were stretched to the country, some ingenious people improvised a system for themselves, stretching a wire on top of the field fence between their farms to use their telephones.

When the Santa Fe railroad came through the northern part of the Texas Panhandle, 12 miles south of Gray, practically all homes and businesses moved to Perryton.

Within two years, a total of 69 businesses moved from Gray to Perryton.

Included in the emigration were several grocery stores, a bank, a hotel, a hardware store, two livery stables, Gray's only doctor, two meat markets, a veterinarian, a newspaper office and a dentist. Whole buildings were moved by horse teams to Perryton.

The post office in Gray continued to operate until May 1964, when it was officially closed. Gray and the surrounding area became

part of the Balco postal district.

The Gray Community Church remained there for many years, until it was relocated to the Museum of the Plains several years ago.

Ochiltree was a hub of culture, commerce

Although little to no evidence remains, Ochiltree was once a prosperous town south of Perryton.

Ochiltree was founded around 1886, when the first dugouts were made. It later became the largest town in Texas 45 miles from a railroad. Ochiltree was located in one of the richest farming and stock-raising sections of the west.

It featured a modern high school, a national bank, water works, an up-to-date flour mill and elevator, three churches (Baptist, Methodist and First Christian), a movie theater, two daily automobile mail lines, a garage and machine shop and a newspaper. It also had one of the best baseball teams in the north Panhandle.

Ochiltree had a rich cultural community. The Ochiltree School was a focal point for entertainment as well as education. Literary Society programs were put on by pupils, and there were speeches, piano solos, duets (both instrumental and vocal), charades and spelling matches. People came from miles around to attend those functions.

The Whippo Orchestra,

composed of local people performed locally and over the surrounding area.

The school had basketball and baseball teams, with girls as well as boys playing.

Car racing was one of the big pastimes, held at a large lake southwest of Ochiltree. A race in 1915, offered prizes of \$2,000 for two days of racing, and entry fee for spectators was \$1.

When the railroad decided to locate north, in what would become Perryton, the citizens of Ochiltree realized it was the best thing for the future of the town and its people.

The wife of a prominent Ochiltree citizen, reportedly remarked to a friend during this time, "I am pretty sure I know where I'm going when I die, but when I get down there I hope it will be a permanent location and I won't be jerked up again and moved out with my house tied to six or seven others to be pulled across these prairies by a steam engine."

Golf Course

Perryton had a 9-hole golf course in 1920, a sand green course located just west of the Perryton school campus.

J.R. McMillen credited with growing first wheat in Ochiltree County

Who started wheat farming in Ochiltree County?

Credit for raising the first wheat seems to be given to J.R. McMillen. Mr. McMillen came to this country in 1900, filing on four sections of land in the southwest part of the county. The McMillen community was named after him.

In 1902 he bought three bushels of seed from George Gerlach of Canadian and sowed it by hand on a small patch of ground near his house. Mr. McMillen stated that this first wheat made about 20 bushels to the acre and that a number of his neighbors got some of it for seed.

The elder McMillen died on Oct. 8, 1928 at the age of 77 years.

His son, W.E. McMillen, who filed on land a few miles southwest of Perryton in 1900, recalled some problems regarding wheat farming in the early days. He was living in Santa Anna, in Coleman County, in the spring of 1900, when his father made the trip to the Panhandle, and his brother, Mood, preceded him to Ochiltree County.

Mood needed a team of mules from the home place in Coleman County, so he sent for them, and Ed brought them out. He and Copeland left Santa Anna in September 1900 and arrived in Ochiltree County on Oct. 8, 1900. At his father's insistence, Ed filed on three sections of land southwest of what is now Perryton, and as he had to live on the land to "prove it up," he made a dug-out and started "baching."

He planted some wheat, soon after his father harvested his first crop, and recalled that the marketplace was in Canadian. To take the wheat to market took four days by wagon, and the Canadian River had to be forded each way. As best he could remember, wheat brought about 80 cents a bushel, and the wagon carried around 80 bushels of wheat. Always, when the wheat was sold, the wagon would come back loaded with groceries or tools, either for the wheat owners or for his neighbors.

Since it took so much time and trouble to take wheat to market, there were no large acreages then, 100 acres being about tops.

In fact, it was a long way to everything in those days, said Mc Millen, even to the post office. They received their mail at the Van Ness post office, which was located on Wolf Creek. From Ed's house to the post office was 25 miles, and he used to take a day off about every two weeks and ride horseback after the mail.

Wheat was raised primarily as a cash crop, since the early settlers rarely fed out livestock. And since there was not a lot of money to be made from it after hauling it so far, there wasn't much wheat raised in the early 1900s.

In fact, wheat growing did not start to reach prominence until the railroad came through in 1919, providing market facilities. Only then did machinery become developed that put the profit into large-scale wheat operations that exist today.



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Father of Perryton was native Iowan

The man who gave his name to Perryton was a Texan by choice.

He was George Morgan Perry, who came to Ochiltree County on April 19, 1886 as a young man of 23 years and he lived here until his death on Feb. 10, 1944.

He was born Nov. 1, 1862 in Grinnell, Iowa and after attending Grinnell College, he left to seek adventure in the southwest.

For a year or two, he wandered around, ever seeking the land that he thought offered the greatest possibilities for development.

When he entered what is now Ochiltree County on April 19, 1886, he knew that he had found just such a land and devoted the remainder of his life to developing its potential.

In May 1886, he filed on land in the county and kept it through the years to pass on to his heirs, never losing faith in the Plains country, even though he saw many years of drought and dust storms as well as lush harvests.

He was married to Miss Minnie A. Doolittle, a college classmate, on Feb. 22, 1893. She was a daughter of Judge Frederick B. Doolittle, Delhi, Iowa.

She died in 1901, leaving two daughters, Anne Louise and Harriet Ellen. In 1910, he married Mary Elizabeth Egg-leston, who died in 1914.

George Perry was a man who looked ever to better things in the future. He was a planner and builder, not a dreamer. He was one of that sturdy band of pioneers who organized Ochiltree County in 1889 and served as the first county and district clerk.

The first election in the county was held in 1890 and 64 votes were cast. In 1892, the total votes dropped to 46 and in 1894 only 38 voted. Judge Perry was reelected to office at each of these elec-



George M. Perry

tions.

He served as county judge from 1903 to 1908.

Judge Perry's goal for this country was for it to have a railroad and he worked for 30 years to get one established. After two or three unsuccessful attempts, in which he lost most of his savings, the goal was achieved in 1919 when the Santa Fe built through the county and Perryton, named in his honor, came into existence.

With the coming of the automobile, he foresaw the dawn of a new era in transportation, an era in which modern, paved, all weather highways would be just as important as steel rails had been in the past.

He then started on the development of Perryton as a highway center, a project that remained uppermost among his many civic activities to his last day.

Even in his later years, Judge Perry remained youthful in his thinking, contributing much to the growth and progress of the town named in his honor.

When he died in 1944, a tremendous crowd paid homage to the man who will always have a place in the forefront of Perryton and Ochiltree County's history.

Population in 1922

By August, 1922, Perryton's population was estimated at 2,000.



PERRYTON IN 1921—Above is an aerial view of the City of Perryton in 1921. Businesses and residences had begun to fill in the landscape.

Chamber of commerce organized in 1921

Every growing city has to have boosters working for it, and Perryton organized a group of such boosters into the Chamber of Commerce which was first organized in May 1921.

L.S. Hobbs was elected president, with Dave Shanks secretary-treasurer. Directors were Geo. M. Perry, Fred Hood and R.T. Correll. Dues were set at \$12 per year.

The Chamber of Commerce had plenty of opportunities for service because just about everything in the way of civic projects needed to be done.

The Chamber of Commerce, in its early days, devoted a great deal of time toward highway development, because the leaders of the community realized early that if Perryton were to grow, it would have to be served by highways.

The biggest opportunity for highway development in the early days was the D-C-D Highway, the Denver-Canadian-Dallas route which saw towns along the route fight each other for the designation.

Perryton boosters worked vigorously in the D-C-D organization and were successful in getting the route designated through Perryton. They had to fight Spearman and Guyton which wanted a highway west of Perryton which would have bypassed this city entirely.

Highway promotion was primitive in the early 1920s. There was no network of

state and federal highways. Highway promotion was done by communities, and thus it was up to the D-C-D boosters in Perryton to see that the road was graded and that signs were posted.

Individual merchants were sold D-C-D highway markers and it was the individual's job to see that his marker was placed and kept in good repair.

The Uncle Sam Highway was another promotion, and many man hours were spent in promoting this east-west route through Perryton into Oklahoma and west into Dalhart.

W.B. LaMaster and Geo. M. Perry were tireless workers on both of these highways. They were joined by Van W. Stewart, R.T. Shindler, C.W. Callaway, Fred Hood, Mansel Coffee and Henry Coffee.

In 1924, the Chamber of Commerce promoted cotton as a cash crop in these parts to supplement wheat and feed grains. The Chamber conducted a campaign to bring in a cotton gin, purchasing a two-acre site and contributing \$500 toward the purchase of machinery for this gin.

George Dean and M.A. Flow of Sayre, OK, agreed to put in the gin and it did get into operation through the efforts of businessmen and others working through the Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber of Commerce also raised the money for the Perryton Municipal Band, hiring Prof. George L. Hyde as director in 1924.

At the annual C of C banquet in 1926 it was reported that Perryton had shipped out \$250,000 worth of poultry, eggs and cream that year in addition to a wheat crop.

Credit for routing the Great Plains Highway (now U.S. 83) through Perryton from Liberal is given to R.T. Shindler, C.W. Callaway and Jas. W. Wilson who attended the annual Great Plains Highway meeting in McCook, NE, and secured the routing from Regina, Canada, to Mexico City. Delegations from Perryton, Canadian, Lubbock and Sweetwater convinced the association to follow this route.

This was the first step toward getting a federal designated highway through Perryton and the move was opposed by neighboring towns.

The Chamber pushed for a road tax election which would provide money to build roads along the Santa Fe railroad line, east and west, the Uncle Sam highway north and south, and the Uncle Sam highway route to the east.

In 1926, W.B. LaMaster was elected president of the Uncle Sam Highway Association. The route extended from Oklahoma City to Seiling, Canton, Watonga, Arnett, Higgins, Perryton. Most of the road was a trail and numerous pasture gates had to be opened by the traveler on the road at that time.

In 1928, the Chamber pushed a campaign to plant

trees in Perryton. They purchased a quantity of Chinese Elm trees from a Ft. Worth nursery and sold them at cost to local residents. Trees ranged in price from 90 cents to \$1.90 and the chamber offered cash prizes to boys and girls engaged in a tree selling contest.

The goals announced for the chamber in 1929 included: A modern hotel in Perryton; more rural mail routes; streets marked and houses numbered; a hospital; a commission form of city government; hard surfaced state highway 4 through Perryton; a public library; free city mail delivery; a Western Union office; city express service.

All of these goals were realized in due time, and those who worked together to build a city saw their dreams materialize by the end of the first decade of Perryton.

Equity expands during 1921

The Perryton Equity, founded in 1919, was busy constructing a new elevator and warehouse in 1921.

The new elevator was to have a capacity of 25,000 bushels of grain, with the exterior covered with galvanized iron. The warehouse would have 2,400 square feet on the main floor and 1,200 square feet in the basement.

The Equity also began construction of a branch elevator at Farnsworth. The old elevator was moved to Twichell.

Buster Lilly served as fire chief

The Perryton Volunteer Fire Department was organized early in Perryton's history, and the late W.B. Lilly served as fire chief longer than anyone in the city's history.

He was elected first chief, and served along with F.E. Griffith, George Lilly, Ernest Allen, J.A. Willis, L.S. Hobbs, E.L. Coffee, Guy Holt, Ed Morgan and A. Wade when officers were named in 1921.

The department started off with makeshift equipment, but bought a real Chevrolet fire truck in 1925. This was followed by a custom built Seagraves truck, purchased for \$6,500 with another \$1,400 worth of fire hose.

In 1948, the department added another truck, a Chevrolet pumper, and in 1964 bought a new \$10,000 custom built truck.

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FIRST FOOTBALL TEAM — In the fall of 1922, Perryton High School fielded its first football team. Their first game was against Follett and was played in the Lilly Pasture. Perryton won, 74-6, and had a 4-2-1 season the first year. Picture are linemen; Glen Raoan, Merl Jackson, Herring Lance, Gilbert Ragsdale, Elton Walker, Miles Pearson and Virby Conley. Leroy Hartman was the quarterback, Rufus Ferguson played right halfback, Oscar Gamel was fullback and George Holland played left halfback. Standing in the rear are, left, Ralph Rupprecht, Roy Beever, Roger Pearson and Noel Keith. Members of the team not pictured were A. L. Carter and Ross Cook.

Football not supported by Perryton in the 1920s

Perryton today has a reputation of being a "football town" and fans of this city take a back seat to no one when it comes to supporting the Perryton Rangers.

It wasn't always that way, and when football was established as a school sport, it took quite a bit of doing.

The first football team was organized in the fall of 1922, but without the blessing or support of the school administration.

The high school boys wanted to play, and petitioned for a team, but the administration at that time thought it too much of an ex-

pense to undertake.

However, permission was granted for Perryton to have a football team if practice were done after school hours, the games played on Saturdays, and the players provided all their own equipment.

H.I. Hudson, who was at that time principal of Perryton High School, took the lead in getting a team established. He met with some downtown merchants who agreed to furnish the equipment for the team. These merchants pledged a certain amount, and collection was made each week by Hudson and Sam Hergert of the Plaview Hardware.

An "outsider" from Oklahoma, C.C. (Doc) Hockman, was hired as a coach, and the team was organized.

Members of that first Perryton High School football team were Oscar Gamel, Leroy Hartman, Leslie Willis, George Holland, Rufus Ferguson, Glen Ragan, Roy Beever, Merl Jackson, A.L. Carter, Miles Pearson, Ralph Rupprecht, Herring Lance, Noel Keith, Gilbert Ragsdale, Eldon Walker, Glen Tarbox, Walter Wilson and H.C. Coffee.

There was no season schedule. Instead, the manager, H.I. Hudson, matched games each week and the team didn't know for sure who they would play from

week to week. Scouting reports were unheard of.

The first game was played in September 1922, against the Follett Panthers. None of the Perryton players had ever played a down of football, but they caught on quickly because they won this initial game, 74-6.

It is recorded in the Herald that the initial expense for outfitting the football team was slightly over \$200.

That first football team won six, lost three and tied one. They won over Booker, Higgins, Forgan, Canadian, Beaver and Tyrone, while losing to Beaver, Tyrone and Pampa. They tied Canadian.

Perryton built school in 1922

When the residents of Perryton moved to their new townsite in 1919, they left their schools at Ochiltree and Gray, planning to build a new school in a new town.

School was held in temporary buildings and in churches in that first year. The Perryton school board invested in several small frame buildings used as classrooms, with the intent to sell these when permanent buildings were constructed.

The Sunday School rooms of the Methodist and Christian churches served as school rooms.

Plans were drawn for a new high school, to be the pride of the area. Envisioned was a massive brick structure, complete with basement and two stories above ground.

The architect for the project was employed and presented plans. The school board was enthusiastic about it and so were a great many other people. But not everybody.

Objections were raised on the grounds that it was more building than Perryton would ever need. The auditorium was designed to hold 900 people and critics of the school bond issue said that people in this community would rattle around in it "like peas in a bass drum."

Another point of dissension was the inside gymnasium in the basement. A great many people were not ready for a change that would put athletics into the

school program and waste money on an indoor gymnasium.

Despite the controversy, most people believed in schools and wanted a school that Perryton would be proud of. The bond issue was set at \$175,000 in May, 1921, and the election was held that month. The vote was 300 for and 69 against.

In June, the school board let a contract to build five frame buildings, 24 by 32 feet to house classes.

That fall, in 1921, even though housed in temporary facilities, the school enrollment totaled 319, with 75 in high school.

The contract was let for A.F. Stewart Construction Co. of Oklahoma City, Okla, for the new school building at a cost of \$175,000.

The first and second grade classes were held at the Christian Church, third grade in the Baptist Church and the others in the other school buildings that fall.

Construction of the new school building went according to schedule, and the school was put in use in the 1922-23 school term. The first graduates from the new building were awarded diplomas in 1923.

It was a fine building, with plenty of room for children of all grades. The spacious new auditorium with its balcony, was used for all manner of community events.

By 1927, there were 600 students in the Perryton schools and conditions were becoming crowded.

Cotton was tried in earlier years

Perryton's economy was built in the beginning on agriculture, wheat and cattle, with the emphasis upon wheat. Wheat was the leading cash crop in the early 1920s, supplemented by feed grains used for livestock feeding.

Along in 1923, a boom began for cotton. People wondered why it was that cotton, a big cash crop down state, never got a foothold here. Some of them planted cotton to see if it would grow, and it did very well.

It was not expected that cotton would ever replace wheat, but it was hoped that it would provide another cash crop.

Cotton planted in the spring of 1923 amounted to about 2,500 acres in the Perryton area. It averaged about one-half bale per acre when harvested that fall, and that

was good enough to start people to talking about a gin.

By 1924, a gin was assured. In fact, a gin costing about \$19,000 was started, with some help and encouragement from the Chamber of Commerce in what was probably the first industrial promotion project. The Chamber provided the site and raised \$500 to pay the freight on the machinery from Sayre, OK.

This Perryton Gin went into operation in September 1924 and Allen M. Wilbanks Jr. had the first cotton ginned in it.

Interest in cotton remained fairly steady until 1926, when the first bumper wheat crop poured money into farmers' pockets and made them forget about raising cotton. It wasn't until years later that the crop was tried in Ochiltree County.

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Perryton post office upgraded in 1925 to second class status

The Perryton Post Office became a second class office on July 1, 1925. There were only two other second class offices north of Amarillo, at Canadian and Dalhart.

With the advent of the new second class rating, the postmaster's annual salary increased \$200 to \$2,400 a year. The upgrade also allowed two clerks under the new classification, each with a salary of \$1,700 a year.

According to a story in the Herald, "The clerks of the office are now under the civil service act and the present Assistant Postmaster John A. Black has already been given his rating without the formality of an examination.

"The general delivery parcel post and other windows will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The schedule of the clerk's hours are as follows: Clerk No. 1-9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Clerk No. 2-7:30 to 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 5:30 p.m.

"We would just like to add that the postal authorities set the hours that the general delivery windows should be open, so do not expect the clerks to open up the windows for your convenience at all hours.

"When they are on duty at hours the window is not open, just remember that they have work to do. The present schedule calls for an eight hour day for each clerk."



WHEAT HARVEST — The 1926 Ochiltree County wheat harvest went into the record books as one of the largest in the county's history. Over 3.5 million bushels of grain was harvested at an average price of around \$1 per bushel. Pictured above are combines working in the Dodson wheat field during the 1926 harvest.

Only failure of bank here back in 1924

Perryton at one time had three banks, two of which remain active today.

The other bank at one time was perhaps the leading bank in the community, being housed in a brand new brick building at what is now the corner of Second and Main, site of the former First National Bank location.

The Farmers and Stockman State Bank moved to Perryton from Ochiltree and its president was Allen M. Wilbanks Jr.

The bank found itself, in the fall of 1924, in a precarious position because of too

many uncollectible loans which resulted in frozen assets.

The doors were closed in October 1924 and the depositors were paid by the State Banking Department of the State of Texas, out of the \$160,000 on deposit plus other funds.

The closing of the Farmers and Stockman Bank was a serious economic blow to the Perryton community.

The First National Bank bought the brick building and fixtures of the Farmer and Stockman State Bank and located there for a time.

The Perry Memorial Library, one of the finest in the Panhandle, had its humble beginnings in 1925, when the Perryton Sorosis Club decided to sponsor a library project.

At the club's third meeting, members voted to sponsor a library project as its first community project, with Mrs. Henry Cutter as chairman.

The first library was located in the front balcony of

Huntoon had stores once

Huntoon, to the east of Perryton, is now distinguished by the large concrete Equity elevator, but at one time it was a thriving small community with a number of stores serving a trading area.

In 1924, Huntoon merchants got together and took

the Perryton Mercantile, and Mrs. Frank Keith volunteered to oversee it. Book donations were sought as well.

Mrs. Harriet Thornton was elected the first club librarian to look after the selection of books and collection of book fees. The club also received a loan of 50 books from the state library to get it started.

In 1926, Mrs. Freeman Garrett succeeded Mrs.

Thornton as librarian, and since Mrs. Keith could no longer look after the books, club members took turns two afternoons a week.

During 1928, the library was moved to the Carson Bakery, and in 1929 it moved again, to Edwards Toggery.

To add to the library's collection, the Sorosis club had a cooked food sale, book teas and other fund raisers. By 1949, the library had grown to over 5,000 volumes.

In 1940, the library relocated once again, this time to City Hall, with Mrs. Bess Winters as the first salaried librarian. The books were moved to the courthouse annex in 1942, and Mrs. W.C. May was appointed librarian.

In 1956, Mrs. D.D.

Shanks was appointed librarian. She served for several years, and was followed by Thelma Davis and Viola Wait, before librarian Celestine Thompson was hired in 1977.

In 1959, Mr. and Mrs. A.P. Spicer donated the current Perry Memorial Library building and fixtures. The books finally had a permanent home.

As the number of volumes grew, there became a need for more space. In 1968, in memory of her late husband, Mrs. Spicer donated an addition, which doubled the size of the library.

In 1984, a county bond issue provided another expansion at the library, adding the basement, children's section and periodical room to the facility.

PROUD TO GROW WITH PERRYTON FOR 100 YEARS

 Equity Exchange

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Phone: (806) 435-4016

Ever since Equity Exchange opened its doors in 1919 at the new rail line in Perryton, we've taken a lot of pride in championing Perryton and the rural communities we serve.

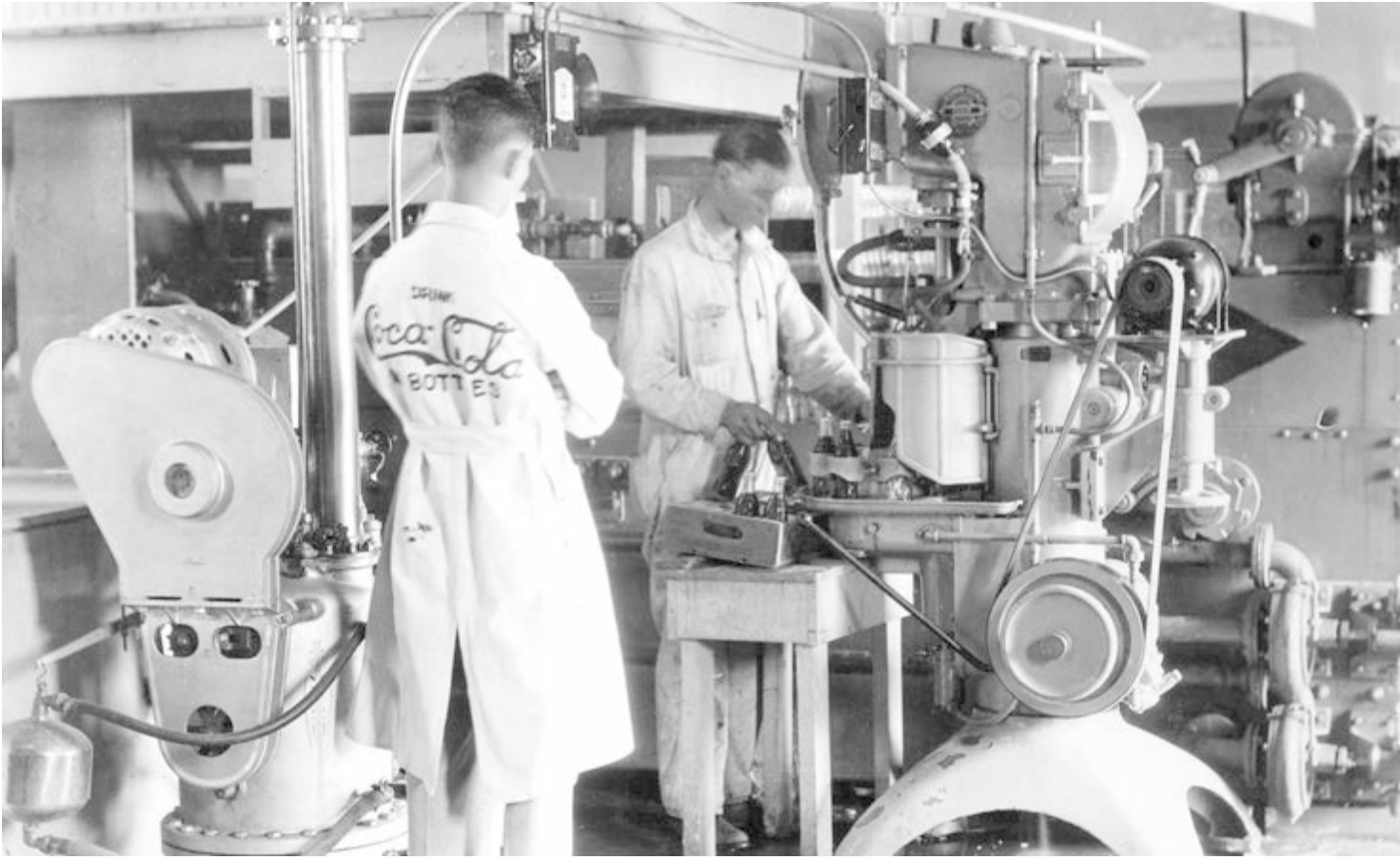
Since that time, the organization has grown to include 25 grain facilities, 14 retail agronomy centers, 15 24-hour fuel stations and a 30,000 square foot distribution center to provide specific products for the locations throughout Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas.



Early Equity elevator on Brillhart Avenue - circa 1920 (at left)

Equity's newer feed store and elevator in 1947 (at right)





COCA-COLA — Perryton Coca-Cola bottled soft drinks at its plant in 1926. Coca-Cola syrup was shipped into Perryton, then local water was used to complete the mixture. The glass bottles had "Perryton, Texas" stamped in the bottom.

Coca-Cola plant established in fall of 1926

The Perryton Coca-Cola Bottling Co. was established in October of 1926 by Jack O. Lusher of Fort Worth, who announced plans at that time for a bottling plant estimated to cost \$12,000.

He envisioned a capacity of 700 cases of bottled drinks per day that would serve the entire north Panhandle area.

The new plant was opened in April of 1927 and the cost had risen by that time to \$25,000. The owner gave away 700 cases of Coca Cola as a feature of the grand opening.

The plant had the most modern bottling and cleaning machinery in the building located on Brillhart avenue. Lusher did establish an area wide

wholesale distributing plant in Perryton which employed dozens of people.

In the early 1930s the plant was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Nabors and a young fellow from Georgia, John W. Sammons, was made manager of the operation.

He saw the company expand and grow and climaxed a

long-standing ambition in 1967 when the Perryton Coca Cola Bottling Co. moved into a brand new plant on Highway 15 with the most modern machinery known in the industry. The plant eventually closed.

News of 1926 spotlighted

The Herald ran one of its first "news in review" stories spotlighting the major news of the year, in January 1927. Following are the picks at that time for the major happenings during 1926:

"The files of the Herald for the past year reveal many interesting tales concerning Perryton and vicinity as a review of the highlights of the year show.

"The new Year of 1926 opened with a rush of social events and business changes. Then came the announcement of reduced fire insurance rates, Chamber of Commerce activities and in March the meeting of the district court.

"The biggest snow of the winter fell March 27 and brought joy to the Panhandle farm homes, ensuring a good crop for all ... Late in April came the announcement that five oil tests were to be sunk in this immediate territory, work to be started within fifteen days.

"In May came the special road tax election which carried by a large majority and the graduation exercises of the schools. The first issue in June told of a two inch rain which soaked the Panhandle and on June 15 the first Ochiltree County well was spudded.

"Also in June came the story of the enormous sales of combines at Perryton which exceeded any other

point in the United States. The first load of wheat arrived in Perryton June 21 and stories of high yields and tests began coming in from many sources.

"A group of Woodward boosters visited Perryton, June 24, and a booster trip from Oklahoma City followed a month later. Bank deposits in Perryton jumped from \$376,000 on January 1 to \$1,200,000 on July 20.

"It was estimated that 56,000 bushels of wheat were being received a day during the big wheat harvest and at one time there were 250,000 bushels of wheat dumped on the ground in Perryton.

"Then came the primary election when all Texas went to the polls. Early in August came the report that a showing of oil had been made in the Strickler and Barton wells.

"September brought the old settlers' picnic and the opening of school, and also a group of Enid Boosters. Also came the announcement of the appointing of a full time secretary for the Chamber of Commerce.

"The first bale of cotton ginned in Perryton was hauled to Perryton on September 17. The announcement of many new buildings and homes was also made, many of them started.

"At the middle of October it was stated that twenty-two

new homes had been built since harvest. And then the circus came to town ... The first snow of the season fell early on the morning of November 8.

"Officials of the Uncle Sam highway made Perryton their convention city during the month. The City Council voted to sell the municipal light plant and a mass meeting was called to discuss the question.

"The annual banquet of the Chamber of Commerce was held December 15. The city election on selling the light plant carried with no opposition, concluding most of the big news of the year.

"Thousands of other events have happened, all of importance, but it would be impossible to outline them in one issue, impossible to give the news of the year in a single paper.

"But it has been a prosperous year for Perryton and a busy one, and may this one be as bright."

Perryton has biggest combine sales in U.S.

A story in the June 24, 1926 Herald noted that Perryton had sold more combines than any other point in the United States.

The writer had this to say: "According to our dealers 124 combines have been sold in Perryton this spring. Tractor sales total 99 and 131 trucks have been sold. The sales on combines, tractors and grain trucks alone total over a half million dollars.

"Without doubt these totals could have been much larger were the manufacturers able to make deliveries, but many orders have had to be turned down because of advice from factories that no more deliveries could be made.

"Feeling reasonably sure that the large number of sales made in Perryton was exceptional, the Herald has written a good many letters, to implement dealers, farm papers and other sources to find out if this claim had any foundation.

"F.W. Wirt, advertising manager for the J.I. Case

Company, Racine, Wisconsin, writes, 'We are inclined to believe that you can quite reasonably claim first place.' M.M. Hunting of the International Harvester Company, Chicago, Illinois gives us the following information, 'If Perryton dealers have sold 100 to 125 harvest threshers this year they are among the top-notchers.'

"L.A. Lincoln, associate editor of the Implement and Hardware Trade Journal, Kansas City, Missouri, writes: 'I should not be surprised if the claim of Perryton in selling the greatest number of combines this year is correct. So far as I can learn here, Perryton is IT...'

"The Herald office is preparing a number of stories which will be sent to the large daily newspapers in the middle west, to tell the world what Perryton is doing. Publicity of this kind is the most valuable bit of advertising that we can put out, and should set people thinking of the opportunities in the Great Plains where crops are good and land is cheap."

Wheat crop of 1926 put Ochiltree County on map

Although wheat was raised in Ochiltree County before Perryton was founded, it was the 1926 crop which put Perryton "On the Map" as champion wheat producing county of the Southwest and started the present day emphasis on wheat as a cash crop.

This crop was a record crop in more ways than one. The yields established that year still stand as the all-time high. For years afterward, and especially during the bleak dust bowl period, people still talked of the wonderful 1926 crop.

With wheat selling around \$1 a bushel, money flowed into Perryton in a never-ending flood. Banks were crammed with money, business houses and residences were built by the dozen. Perryton ceased becoming a country town and began to get city ideas after that 1926 crop was harvested and sold.

After a dismal 1925 season, when the wheat crop was almost a total failure, it was thought that farmers would turn to other crops for an income. There was much talk about cot-

ton as a good thing and others wanted to turn away from wheat back to cattle raising.

But farmers planted more wheat in the fall of 1925 than had ever been planted before, some 100,000 acres. Nature did the rest.

Rain fell that fall and continued at regular intervals in the spring. By May 1926, a good crop was assured. An average yield of 25 bushels to the acre was forecast, and Perryton was looking forward to one of its most prosperous years and probably its best harvest.

Elevator men expected to ship out over two million bushels of wheat, provided nothing happened to the crop in the meantime.

This year, as in subsequent years, the boxcar shortage was of grave concern. Even before the 1926 crop was harvested, it was announced that the car shortage would be the worst since 1922.

By the end of June, combines were in the fields and the grain was coming into Perryton in a constant stream. On June 26, the Equity had its largest single

day, when 324 loads of wheat were received, most of them truck loads, averaging well over 60 bushels per load. This made over 20,000 bushels received that day.

Another week saw the total wheat harvest in the Perryton area rise past the half million mark. All elevators were full and besides this 123,000 bushel capacity, 420,000 bushels had been shipped out.

The boxcar shortage was terrific, and only 10 or 15 cars a day were being received in Perryton. Trucks and wagons were lined up for blocks around the elevators at all hours of the day waiting to be unloaded.


On July 22, 1926, Perryton elevators had shipped out 1,368,700 bushels of wheat and had 282,000 bushels on hand ready for shipment. It was estimated that there were 250,000 bushels piled on the ground.

Along with the wheat boom came a housing shortage. There was not a single house or even a shack for rent in the town.

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New City Hall built in 1927 for \$13,000

Perryton's new City Hall was finished and turned over to the city at the end of October 1927.

The occasion was highlighted in the Herald:

"This beautiful new building was erected at a cost of over \$13,000. It is a very attractive structure and is of ample size to accommodate all departments of the city administration.

"The exterior of the hall is finished in a chocolate colored glazed brick with cut stone trimmings. The

new building is 45 x 65 feet, with cement sidewalks on both sides and in the rear. The lawn will be planted to grass. A fire hose drying rack has been built in the rear.

"The city clerk's office is located in the front on the east side. It is a large well lighted room. The fixtures and finish are of oak. Water bills, city and school taxes are payable at this office.

"In the rear of this office is the council room. This room is finished in oak also. A large vault for the storage of records opens off of the council room, as does also the rest rooms and shower baths for use of city employees.

"In the center of the building is the fire department headquarters with space for two large trucks. The massive front doors leading to the street are operated automatically, a slight pull making them fly open instantly.

"On the west is a room which will be used for water department storage and warehouse. There is also room in this department for the water truck.

"Perryton citizens are proud of this beautiful new city administration building. It is the outstanding structure of its kind on the North Plains and is a credit to the town. Perryton, 'The Peerless of the Plains,' never stops building, it is ever going forward."

Kindergarten

Mrs. W. H. Lance opened her first kindergarten class in Perryton on Sept. 1, 1925.

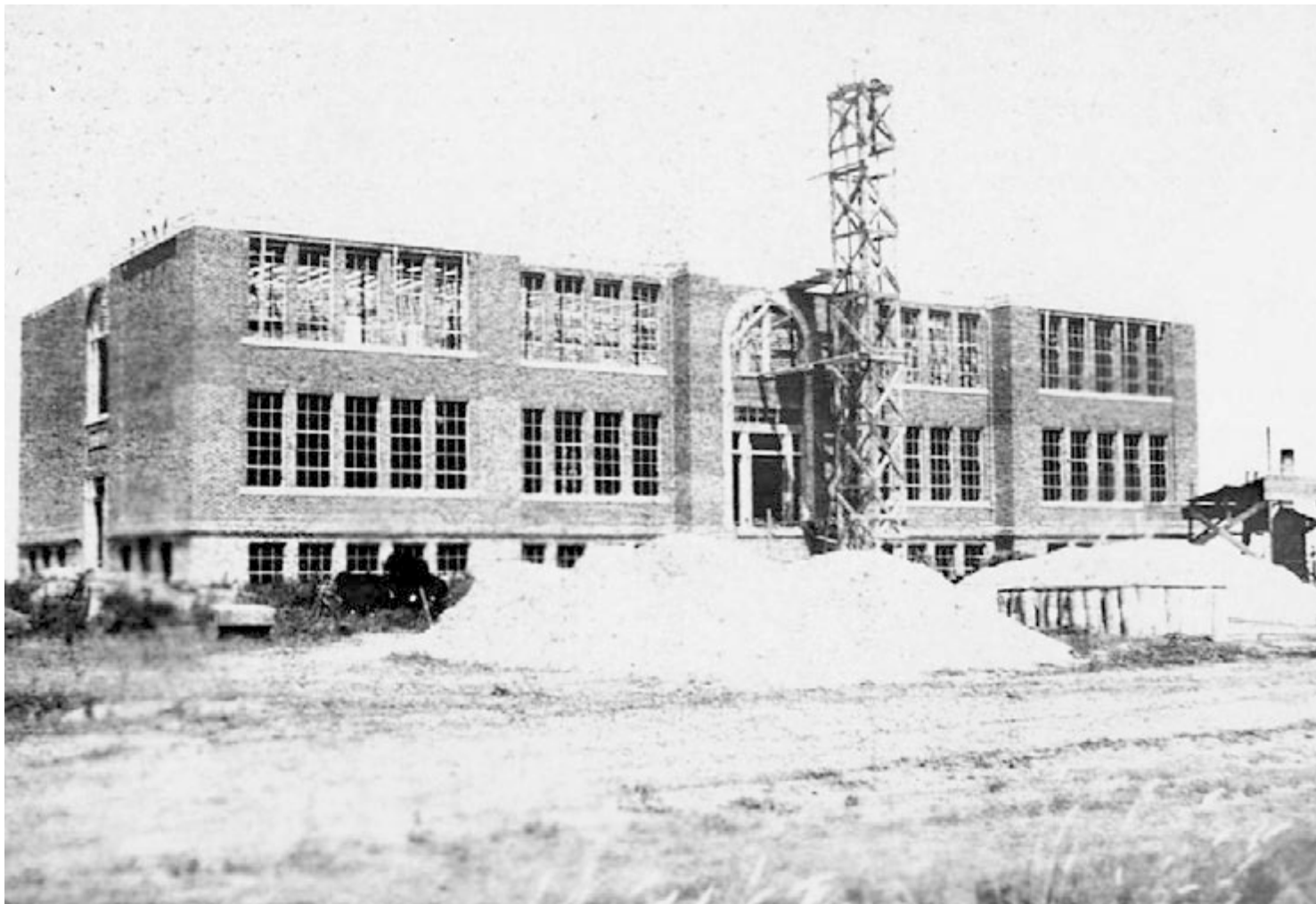
Orchestra broadcast in 1927

The Perryton Municipal Orchestra was to be featured during a one hour program broadcast from Oklahoma City radio station KFJF on March 7, 1927 and the following day to be in concert on Bristow, OK station KVOO.

The broadcast was arranged through the efforts of the director, George Leroy Hyde, with the cooperation of the Perryton Chamber of Commerce.

A representative of the Chamber also appeared on the program, broadcasting a few facts about Perryton and Ochiltree County.

A large number of telegrams were received by the orchestra at the two stations, not only from Perryton, but from many other states, congratulating them on a fine program.



HIGH SCHOOL — The new Perryton high school was under construction when this picture was made in 1927. The building at the right was outgrown less than four years after it was opened and the new high school was built at a cost of \$75,000.

Perryton is designated as stop for Mono airline

In September of 1927, officials from Mono Air Line visited Perryton to make arrangements for designating Perryton as an airport on the company's newly established line from Amarillo to Kansas.

Visiting were L.G. Foster, president of Mono Air Line and Lt. Robert H. Gray, piloting one of the Ryan monoplanes, who flew in to inspect the new local airfield.

The Mono officials flew here from Amarillo, making the 95 mile trip in exactly an hour.

In addition to passenger

service which they would also handle at the rate of ten cents per mile, the Mono line was to carry air mail and express.

While in Perryton, Foster

left instructions for laying out the field and made all necessary arrangements.

The only other port in Texas was to be at Borger.

Lt. Gray was to deliver air

mail as well as passenger service.

Many local residents were also taken up in the afternoon for short pleasure rides.

Telephone poles moved in 1927

In April 1927, Mr. Kelly, manager of the Perryton Telephone Exchange, arranged to move all the telephone poles off of the streets and into the alleys to help beautify the city.

The Herald noted at the time, "Manager Kelly ... is to be complimented for the

fine civic spirit which has caused him to go to a great expense in moving all telephone poles off of the streets of Perryton into the alleys. Mr. Kelly is doing this on his own initiative and not by the request of city officials.

"It is a fine spirit and is in keeping with the policy

which makes the Perryton Telephone Exchange one of the best systems in the southwest...

"When this move is completed, there will be few poles on any street in this city. All electric light poles, with a few exceptions, are already in the alleys."

Join us at sunset Saturday, Aug. 24 for a Celebration Fireworks Show at the Expo!

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BREAKING GROUND — Ground was broken for the Ochiltree county courthouse in a ceremony in 1928 with Judge J.M. Grigsby at the shovel. Some of the other men are Sam Handy, H.C. Brillhart, W.G. Yeary, J.M. Bull.

Perryton as it was in 1928

In 1928, Perryton was a small town of approximately 2,000 people and it was nine years old.

While there had been considerable building, both residential and commercial, during these nine years, most of the homes and businesses were wooden structures brought from Ochiltree and Gray.

There were no paved streets in Perryton although a move was under way in 1928 to secure paved streets.

In rainy weather, Main Street was deep in mud and travel was difficult in any part of town. Of course, there were no paved highways in 1928 either, much less paved farm-to-market roads.

Perryton did have a water system and a sewage disposal system in 1928. Not everybody had indoor plumbing, however, and there were plenty of outdoor toilets in town.

In 1928, Perryton occu-

piated but a portion of the present townsite. The city ended at ninth avenue, except for a few scattered houses south of there.

What is now 24th avenue, the loop road, was called a lover's lane in 1928 and was considered out in the country. Mrs. Beulah Stark lived in the farmhouse there, and it was farmland from her place to the city limits north.

There was very little on the north side of town, either, but in 1928 a land development company sold lots north of the railroad track for \$75 each and before long, there were some homes built there.

A building boom of sorts got under way in 1928 with a number of brick business houses constructed then that are still here.

In April of that year, a young man named Irving "Speed" Wallace was booked to try and establish a new American marathon running record by running from Perryton to Bismark, ND, a distance of more than 1,000 miles.

The highway boosters agreed to pay Wallace's expenses for the attempt to set a new record.

On the morning of April 11, 1928, the race was started. There were people from far away, including a Fox Movietone camera crew, writers for the Associated Press, the Kansas City

Star and the Wichita Beacon.

He made it to Liberal the first day, blaming the wind for the lack of distance. Every day reports were filed as Speed Wallace ran from town to town. On April 27, Speed Wallace galloped into Bismark, having covered the distance in 17 days and averaging slightly more than 60 miles per day.

This was a bona fide endurance running record, witnessed by newsmen in three cars who followed him all the way. The news reports always said the run was from Perryton to Bismark and a lot of people found out that there was a Perryton, Texas. This endurance run is credited with getting federal designation for what is now Highway 83 along its present route instead of being to the west through Guymon or to the east through Beaver.

It was announced that Perryton was first in the entire Santa Fe Railroad system in the shipment of live poultry. That year, there were 29 carloads of live poultry shipped from Perryton.

It was a good wheat year in 1928 for Perryton, too. The crop that year amounted to 2,500,000 bushels and Perryton implement dealers reported that there were 209 new combines sold and delivered to area farmers, a national record in this size town.

There were 3,800 carloads of wheat shipped out that year.

Courthouse was built on warrants

The magnificent new Ochiltree County Courthouse which today serves the citizens of this county, was built in 1928 without the necessity of a bond issue.

The commissioners court believed that the county was in good enough financial condition to enable the construction of the courthouse without a bond issue, and that is the route they took.

The court hired an architect and he drew plans for a three story brick structure,

58 by 85 feet, outside dimensions, with an estimated cost of \$100,000.

The contract was let in March 1928 to the firm of Corlett and Welchons of Hutchinson, KS, for \$80,217. Howard Holt got the plumbing contract and J.H. Stansberry of Perryton got the electrical contract.

This is the same construction company that built the new Perryton High School building in 1927.

Construction proceeded on schedule, and the new courthouse was occupied early the next year.

The old courthouse, a historic structure built in Ochiltree with lumber hauled from Dodge City, was sold to the American Legion post in 1929 for \$1,350.

Lions Club began in '28

The Perryton Lions Club is Perryton's oldest civic club, having been organized in June 1928. The organizational meeting was held in the Glasgow Hotel and Dave Shanks was elected first president.

Other officers were R.T. Correll, first vice president; Dr. O.E. Blank, second vice president; Jack Allen, third vice president; Martin Pope, secretary-treasurer; R.T. Shindler, Lion Tamer; and C.W. Claybaugh, Tail Twister. Directors were B.B. Kent, W.B. LaMaster, Geo. M. Perry and W.H. Dunlavy.

1928 Car Prices

In 1928, a person could buy a new Buick sedan for \$1,195, a Pontiac for \$745, a Chevrolet for \$585, and a Ford roadster for \$485.

Wide Acclaim

F.C. Spencer of Ochiltree County won wide renown as a breeder of fine draft horses. His horses won first in every event at the Tri-State Fair in Amarillo in 1924, and he later repeated a sweep of Grand Championships at the Oklahoma City Fair that year.

Legion Auxiliary has 91 years here

The American Legion Auxiliary was founded Feb. 21, 1928 when a group of courageous women braved one of the Panhandle's worst blizzards to meet with Pierce Johnson Post, American Legion, to form an Auxiliary Unit in Perryton.

These women were Mrs. Jack R. Allen, Mrs. Paul Ballew, Mrs. W.L. Fleson, Mrs. Horace Lackey, Mrs. Mamie Powers, Mrs. S.J. Allen, Mrs. Ralph Pugh, Mrs. C.B. Rogers, Mrs. Van W. Stewart and Mrs. J.M. Thompson.

C.B. Rogers, Legion commander, conducted the first meeting at which time Mrs. Van W. Stewart was elected president. Mrs. W.L. Fleson was named vice president; Mrs. Horace Lackey, secretary; Mrs. C.B. Rogers, treasurer; Mrs. Paul Ballew, historian; Mrs. Jack Allen, sergeant at arms. Mrs. Rogers served as treasurer through 1940.

By December 31, 1928, the Auxiliary had a membership of 44.

Before World War II, the Unit had three Gold Star

American Legion is reorganized

The American Legion Post in Perryton was reorganized in February, 1928, after having been inactive for several years.

C.B. Rogers was elected commander of the post, serving with Jack Allen, vice commander; Paul Ballew, adjutant; Jim Thompson, finance officer; Horace Lackey, sgt.-at-arms, R.J. Cook, chaplain and Van W. Stewart, historian.

The Legion post has been continuously active since that time, taking in veterans of World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, and Desert Storm in addition to the World War I and Spanish American War veterans who found the organization.

mothers, Mrs. K.K. Thomas, Mrs. B.J. Phelps and Mrs. F.P. Abney. After World War II, there were 20 Gold Star mothers.

These were Mrs. Lonnie Anderson, Mrs. S.L. Brillhart, Mrs. R.T. Correll, Mrs. Nannie Hughley, Mrs. Augusta Malaney, Mrs. J.C. Mitchel, Mrs. Grace Patton, Mrs. Knox Pipkin, Mrs. J.H. Russel, Mrs. Rosie Smith, Mrs. Beulah Stark, Mrs. Irvin George, Mrs. Howard Slaughter, Mrs. Tyson Black, Mrs. W.B. LaMaster, Mrs. L.T. Tucker, Mrs. T.M. Wright, Mrs. A.L. Truax, Mrs. K.K. Thomas, Mrs. B.J. Phelps, and Mrs. F.P. Abney.

The Auxiliary Unit met for many years with the Legion in their Legion Home, the former Ochiltree County Courthouse which was purchased by the post from the county when the new courthouse was built in 1928. This building, constructed in 1890 from lumber freighted from Dodge City, was razed in 1958 and the Legion and Auxiliary moved to the Veterans Memorial Building. They currently meet at the Senior Citizen Center.

Mrs. Van W. Stewart of the Perryton Auxiliary Unit served as State Auxiliary President in 1932 after serving as 18th District chairman. The Auxiliary members helped Mrs. Stewart during her term of office by folding, addressing and mailing 7,000 copies of the state paper each month. The printing was done gratis by the Stewart Printing Co.

The Auxiliary has supported many community projects over the years, working with the Veterans Hospital, sponsored charity programs and other activities.

The Legion and Auxiliary have a strong Americanism program in the schools and award citizenship certificates in each grade annually. Girls State is another program the local unit sponsors.

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PERRYTON HOTEL — The pride of Perryton in 1929 was the new Perryton Hotel which is seen here under construction. At the left of the hotel is the new Ellis Theatre, another big construction project in that year of a bumper wheat crop and unlimited prosperity.

Hotel Perryton was community project in 1929

The Perryton Hotel was built in 1929 and climaxed a long campaign for the community to have a first class modern hotel to serve travelers and provide meeting facilities for area gatherings.

The Panhandle Lumber Co. in January of 1929 agreed to build a \$90,000 modern brick hotel if the citizens of Perryton and businessmen could raise \$7,500 for the site.

A three story hotel, with second and third floors for

guest rooms and the ground floor for commercial establishments and a coffee shop, was planned.

A committee was formed to raise the necessary \$7,500, composed of W.B. LaMaster, Geo. M. Perry, C.W. Callaway, B.B. Kent and Van W. Stewart.

This committee raised the money by voluntary subscription and the Panhandle Lumber Co. commenced construction of the hotel.

It was completed and all

of Perryton shared in the pride of ownership of the building which was the finest hotel of its size of any Panhandle city outside of Amarillo and Pampa.

County agent, Scouts planted city's trees

Trees are not native to the Plains, and there is a story behind those which grow in Perryton.

In 1929, county agent Guy Sheets and the local Boy Scout troops started a tree planting program that rendered untold service to the community.

Before that time, although Perryton was 10 years old, there were few trees, and such a thing as landscaping a yard was unthought of, except by a scattered few homeowners.

In March 1929, Sheets made arrangements with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in Lubbock to supply 200 Chinese elms at cost, to be furnished to homeowners in Perryton.

In a few weeks, the tree selling and planting campaign opened. The four and five foot Chinese elms were sold for 50 cents, and the eight to ten foot trees were supplied for \$1.50.

Highway was milestone in '29

Back in the early days of Perryton, travel was not quite as simple as it is today. There were no paved highways, and while there were some graded dirt roads, the traveler who went any distance had to travel through pastures, opening and closing countless gates in order to complete the journey.

It was quite a milestone, then, when in February 1929 it was announced that a state highway would be opened up from east to west, providing a graded road east through Follett, Darrouzett and Booker into Woodward, and west through Spearman, Borger and Panhandle into Amarillo.

This highway connected with the new oil fields in Hutchinson County and eventually put Amarillo just 120 miles from Perryton.

At that time the only bridge across the Canadian was between Dumas and Amarillo. Those going by way of Stinnett and Borger still had to ford the river, but there were qualified teamsters for hire who would pull cars across the river bed for a fee.

The Boy Scouts, under the direction of Leroy Hartman, started out to sell trees, but soon found that it was not such an easy job. At that time, in 1929, it was a prosperous year, and people didn't have time to plant trees, although they didn't mind buying them.

So the Scouts threw in another bargain. For 50 cents extra, they would dig the hole and plant the trees, and sales boomed. Within two weeks, the original supply of 200 trees was gone, and more were ordered.

Trees were planted on the courthouse lawn, around the water tower on the north side of the railroad track, and on most of the tree rows along the streets.

The next summer, the tree planting campaign opened again, this time with prizes awarded to the Boy Scouts who sold the most trees. First prize was a Boy Scout uniform, with other pieces of Scout equipment offered as other prizes.

Even the Perryton schools entered into the spirit, and one spring, Superintendent W.B. Irvin had very able-bodied youth in school out at recess digging tree holes

Ellis Theatre built in 1929

The Ellis Theatre officially opened in July 1929, and the following story was written about the facility in the Aug. 15, 1929 Herald:

"The new Ellis Theatre is pointed to with much pride by every citizen of Perryton and the surrounding country. It was built by Carl Ellis at a cost of over \$65,000 and is known today as the finest theatre in the southwest.

"This dream of a playhouse was opened on July 4, and nothing but the latest and best all-talkie shows are being presented. The theatre covers a ground area of 50 x 140 feet and is designed and planned for the exhibiting of talking and sound pictures.

"Seating capacity at the present time is 760, with plenty of room for the installation of 140 additional seats.

"The Palace Drug Co., under the management of

Hugh and Valda Lackey, is located in the Ellis Theatre building and this new store which has just been opened since July 4 is doing an excellent business.

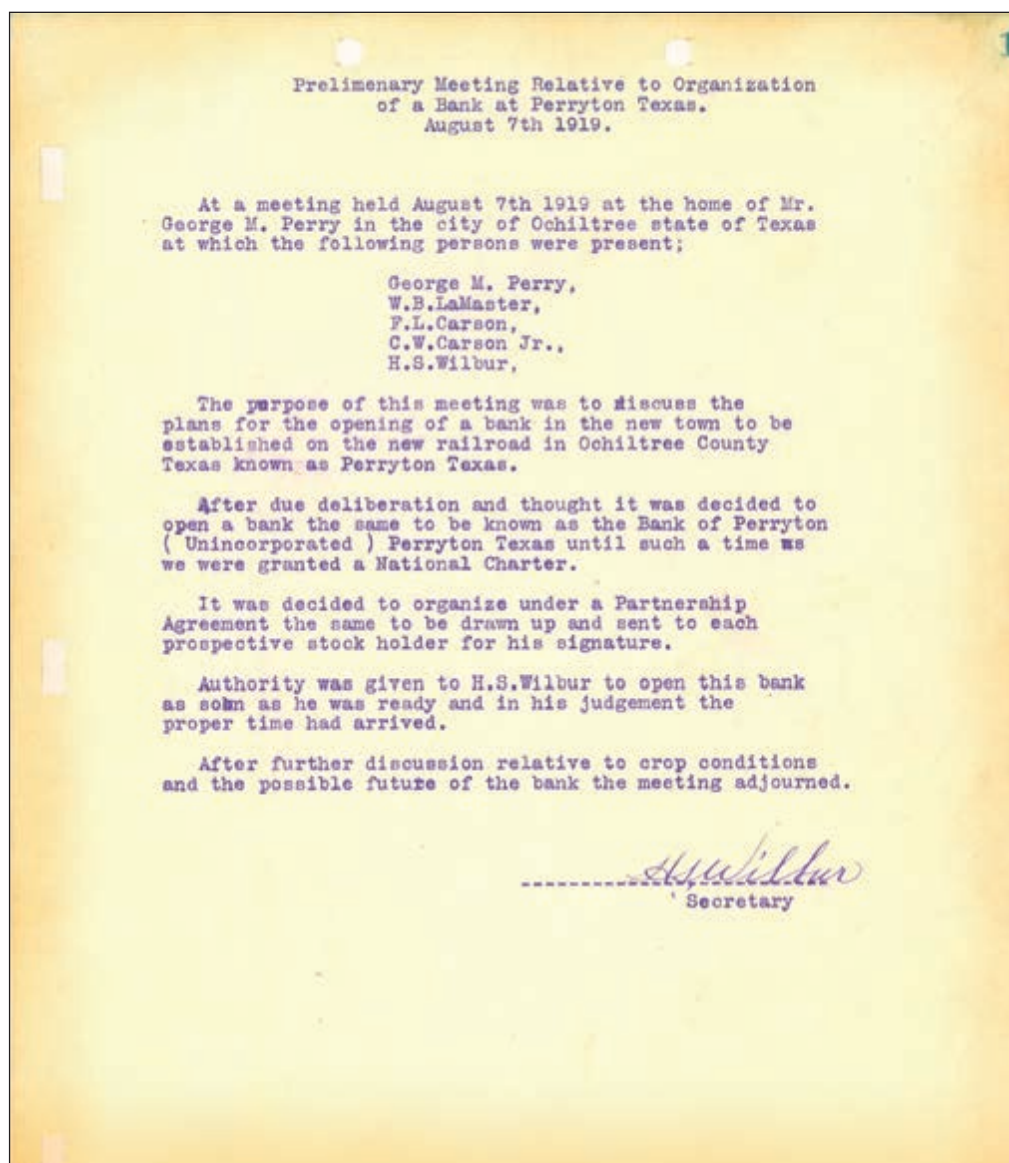
"A complete line of drugs, sundries, tobacco and cigars is carried. They make a feature of fountain drinks and sandwiches with curb service.

"Another business which is located in the theatre building is the City Barber Shop, owned by R. L. Christopher. Beautiful new fixtures have been installed and no expense has been spared to provide every comfort for their many customers.

"On the second floor of the building in the front are three suites of office rooms. Birt and Ong, general contractors, have one suite under lease and Mr. Ellis is using the center suite for his private business office. The south suite is unoccupied at present."

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PERRYTON'S BANK SINCE 1919



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