

SKETCHES OF EARLY DAYS IN TAYLOR

By J. H. GRIFFITH



COMPLIMENTS OF

CITY NATIONAL BANK
TAYLOR, TEXAS

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MEMBER F. D. I. C.

FOREWORD

On April 30, 1975, the City National Bank of Taylor has a Birthday! It is 75 years old.

We feel that it is fitting at this time to publish this Third printing of "Sketches of Early Days in Taylor" by the late J. H. Griffith, one of the Bank's founders, and to update the short history of the City National Bank. We are on the eve of the 100th. Anniversary of the dedication of the townsite of the City of Taylor, in June of 1876. Too, the 200th. Anniversary of our beloved nation—our Bicentennial—will take place on July 4, 1976. So, this little volume is intended to commemorate the bank's 75th. Birthday, Taylor's 100th. Anniversary, and the Bicentennial of the great United States of America.

John M. Griffith
Chairman of the Board

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr. John H. Griffith was one of the founders of the City National Bank, president from 1913 to 1940 and chairman of the board until his death in 1944. He came to Taylor with his family when the city was only 6 years old, in 1883. He was a lover of history with particular interest in the history of our state, of Central Texas, Taylor and the surrounding area.

The following *Sketches of Early Days in Taylor* is printed exactly as it appeared in the Taylor Daily Press of January 12, 1923.

Sketches of Early Days in Taylor

*An accurate and detailed account of the growth of Taylor,
written for the Taylor Daily Press of January 12, 1923*

It has been my purpose for some time to contribute some reminiscences of the early days of Taylor which I have been collecting for several years.

I have selected such of the data as may be of local interest. In the sketches which will follow I have endeavored where practicable to verify facts furnished me in the interviews with the early settlers.

In the reminiscences I have not undertaken to cover a range of facts sufficiently complete to be called a history of Taylor. It is indeed an enormous task to cover in detail all of the important facts connected with the growth of any city. I was fortunate in securing interviews with some of the well known men of Williamson County who lived here before Taylor was laid off in 1876.

Among those to whom I am especially indebted for information may be mentioned the following: J. W. Darlington, C. P. Vance, J. E. Stiles, C. B. Wilson, H. T. Stearns, J. S. Rogers, A. Anderson, Hargis Brothers and others.

A glimpse of the pioneer settlements established in this portion of Williamson County is given as a historical background to the location of Taylor.

J. H. GRIFFITH.

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Settlements were made earlier than 1860 on Brushy and San Gabriel, also at Wilson Springs and on Turkey Creek.

Among the early settlers on Brushy were Calvin and E. B. Barker, Willis Avery, Bartlett Sims, Charles Saul, Doctor Knight, Daniel Kimbro and James O. Rice, the latter had the first postoffice and a tavern at Rice's Crossing.

On the San Gabriel were the families of Hamblen, Gordon, Rubarth, McFaden, Stearns, Eubank, Sloan, Easley and others.

East of Taylor on Turkey Creek, Nicholas and James Branch settled and at Wilson Springs, R. W. Wilson resided.

LATER SETTLEMENTS

On the hillside southwest of Taylor at the A. Symes place was a cowman's camp, and at the mouth of Flag Springs branch southeast was a house and perhaps one near Flag Springs. These nearby settlements appear to have been only temporary habitations. With the exception of the three named locations there were no other permanent settlements nearer the town site of Taylor in 1876 than the one at Wilson Springs which was originally settled in 1849 by John Gooch, and later passed into the hands of R. W. Wilson, father of Charles B. Wilson.

EARLY STORES AND MERCHANTS

The nearest stores were at Circleville and Rice's Crossing. The one at Circleville was owned about 1871 by Seneca D. Brown, who later moved to New York where he became a prominent financier.

C. Tompkins, brother-in-law of Hargis Brothers, had a store at Rice's Crossing in 1877. Stores have continued without interruption at both places.

LOCATION OF TAYLOR, JUNE, 1876

Taylor was first named Taylorsville for an official of the International and Great Northern Railroad.

The Texas Land Company with headquarters at Palestine, Texas, in the spring of 1876 bought the Taylor town site off of the John Winsett and James C. Eaves surveys. The company advertised a sale of town lots to take place in June, 1876, presuming the I. and G. N. would be completed into Taylor by that time. The railroad was not completed by that time but the sale of lots took place about June 10, 1876. Among the first lots sold was one bought by C. P. Vance who was then merchandising at Circleville associated with James A. Simons. He bought lot 14 in block 9 and later bought lot 15 in the same block. Wiley and Porter who were then engaged in business at Davilla bought lots 16 and 17 in the same block. Soon thereafter both firms opened for business on these locations.

In March, 1878, Womack and Sturgis bought lots 1, 2, and 3 in block 4. This is the present Speegle Brothers location and includes the old T. J. Kamp hotel property. The firm was engaged in business at this location until the fire which occurred in the late winter of 1878. This fire originated in the Kamp hotel and swept all of the wooden buildings on West Main Street from First Street to the Wiley and Porter building, and also consumed the buildings on the opposite side of Main Street to the Melasky location on lot 12, block 10.

After the fire Womack and Sturgis bought lots 3 and 4 in block 9, which are the third and fourth lots on the north side of Second Street and west of Main Street. The firm erected a substantial two-story brick on this location. The lower part was used for the mercantile business and the upper part was a well arranged assembly hall, provided with a stage.

Other merchants following were J. Melasky, L. H. Goldstein, Talley and Mead, J. E. Tucker and others.

EARLY RESIDENTS

H Dickson, the first agent for the I. and G. N. R. R. bought residence property lying west of Main Street and north of Seventh Street. His residence was located on the corner. The Dickson Addition extended north and west of the residence. Across Main Street immediately east of the Dickson residence was the old C. P. Vance homestead and on the same block east of the C. P. Vance was the James A. Simons home. Col. Fowzer built in the hackberry grove on the location of the High School building. R. S. Porter built on the southeast corner of block 21 at the intersection of Main and Fourth Streets. Others also located at this time.

FIRST HOTELS AND BOARDING HOUSES

The T. J. Kamp hotel, located on the corner of West Main and First Streets, was the best of the early hotels. Other places kept as boarding houses or hotels before the Taylor Hotel was built by Burkitt and Murphy may be mentioned: Napier Hotel, on the present location of the Taylor Hardware Co.; The Minor Hotel, on the site of T. W. Marse Co. Julius A. Kroschewsky had a bakery and restaurant on the corner of East Main and First Streets.

FIRST PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Soon after the town started in 1876 Prof. John McMurray had a school on the site of the J. W. Darlington residence on Sixth Street, immediately east of the Baptist Church. Here was also held the first Sunday School. Perhaps a little later Mrs. Kitty Hutchins had a school on the location of the present Catholic rectory. Prof. Green in 1882-1883 had a school in the old Odd Fellows' building, located north of the city square at the corner of Main and Fifth Streets. The "Lone Star Institute" about 1884-1885 was located in the northwestern part of the city, on Victoria Street. The teachers were Prof. J. V. Brown and wife. Prof. McMurray abandoned his first location for larger quarters and acquired the lots in block 28 immediately in front of the Presbyterian Church.

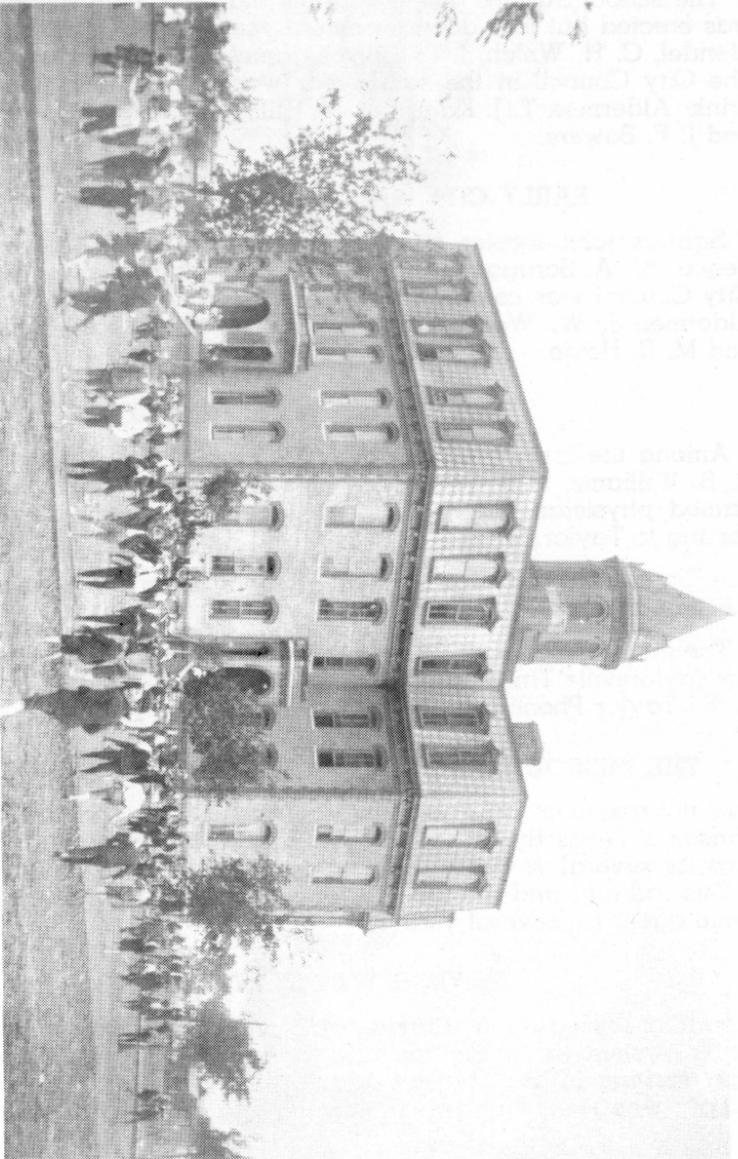
The McMurray school house was a one-story building about twenty-four by sixty feet. It was a boxed, stripped and painted building. The entrance was from the west, on Talbot Street. There was a belfry and bell over the entrance. The playground was immediately south of the school building.

CITY OF TAYLOR ACQUIRES FIRST SCHOOL LOCATION

In August, 1883, the City of Taylor bought of H. Dickson all of block 4 in Dickson Addition as a location for the city schools, and the following year a school building was erected on this site. This building was framed and weather boarded and in size about 24 by 110 feet. A porch on the south extended about two-thirds the length of the building, and the building was divided into three rooms connected from east to west. The east room was for the high school, the center room was for the grammar school and the west room for the primary department. The first teachers here were A. E. Hill, superintendent, teacher of high school, J. S. Jones, teacher of grammar school, and Miss Emma Puckett, teacher of primary.

The school soon required additional room in consequence of the rapid growth of the city and a room was built about ten feet east of the main building. These buildings were removed and in 1890 what was known as the old high school building was erected.

The first graduates of the Taylor Public Schools were Mrs. Robt. L. Shoaf (nee Miss Lillian Noyes) and Fergusson Doak, the only members of the class of 1887.



"OLD HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING"

Erected in 1890

The school trustees at the time the old brick high school building was erected but torn down in recent years were: Dr. A. V. Doak, C. Mendel, C. H. Welch, J. P. Sturgis, James Griffith, and Hugh Burns. The City Council in the same year was composed of Mayor J. O. Frink; Aldermen T. J. Kamp, C. M. Still, J. F. Black, John Threadgill and J. F. Bowers.

EARLY CITY AND PRECINCT OFFICERS

Squires John Napier and J. B. Wright were the first Justices of Peace. W. A. Scruggs was probably the first constable. In 1884 the City Council was composed of the following: Mayor Daniel Moody; Aldermen J. W. Womack, H. Dickson, S. Riley, James A. Simons and M. R. Hoxie.

PROFESSIONS REPRESENTED

Among the first physicians were Doctors A. V. Doak, J. S. Brown, S. B. Williams, F. T. Cook and John Threadgill, although the latter named physician did not attempt to practice to any extent after coming to Taylor.

The legal profession appears to have been represented about this time by John W. Parker, now of Houston.

The first newspaper editors were Minor H. Brown, who published the Taylorsville Times, and Geo. R. Scott and associates, publishers of the Taylor Phonograph.

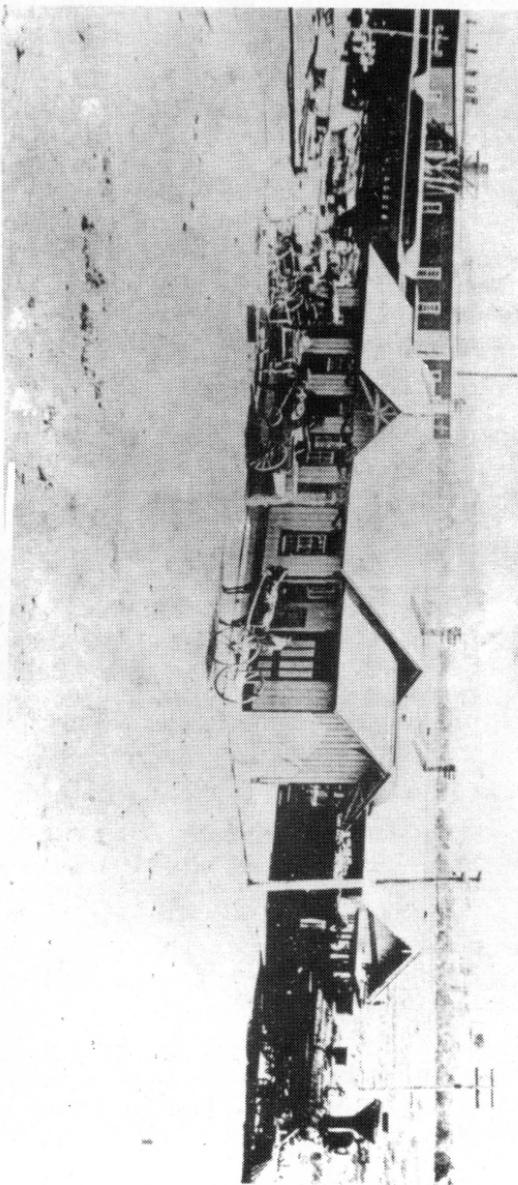
THE MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD REACHES TAYLOR

In the spring of 1882 the Missouri Pacific Ry., now (the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Ry.) was built into Taylor and remained the terminus for several years.

This railroad and the I. & G. N. maintained a joint office with the same agent for several years.

TAYLOR WATER SYSTEM

In 1882-1883 Geo. W. Burkitt and Dan Murphy Sr. put in a water works system to supply the city. The first supply of water came from springs in the Murphy and Mendel pastures. This source of supply was soon found to be inadequate and a pipe line was in-



THE FIRST DEPOT

stalled from the reservoir in the city to the San Gabriel. On account of the occasional summer drouths it was found that this source of water supply could not be depended on, however, the question of water supply was permanently solved by the present owners of the Taylor Water Co. in drilling the deep artesian well which furnishes an abundance of water.

FIRST BANKS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

The first bank in Taylor was a private bank owned by Miller Brothers and Robertson. It was discontinued about 1883.

In 1883 the First National Bank opened for business followed in 1888 by the Taylor National Bank, in 1900 by the City National Bank, in 1913 by the First State Bank and Trust Co.

The Taylor Savings & Loan Association started business in 1885.

FIRST COTTON GIN

It has been said that the first cotton gin built in Taylor was located on the site of the Taylor Bedding Co.'s mattress factory, and built in 1877.

FIRST CHURCHES

The Texas Land Company, owner of the Taylor townsite, encouraged the building of churches and named only a nominal consideration in the deeds to the property deeded by the company to the first churches of Taylor.

According to the records the first church property acquired was lot 6, block 33, deeded March 11, 1878, to the Presbyterian Church.

The trustees named were J. D. Strayhorn, Schoonmaker, R. S. Porter, Jno. McLean, and Wm. T. Powell. Soon after the property was acquired a frame church building was erected. This building was used until a short time before the present brick building was erected in 1912. Among the first pastors were Reverend Jas. P. Lyle, although Prof. McMurray often conducted services here and perhaps others before Rev. Lyle.

The Christian Church bought lot 1, block 32, April 8, 1878, and erected thereon a frame church building. The trustees named in the deed were C. P. Vance, J. Allen Gano, C. Mendel, James Hamilton and George W. Hamilton.

Rev. Ferguson was among the first pastors, although Mr. Abney often conducted services here. The present church brick building was erected in 1891.

The Roman Catholic Church located on lots 6 and 7, block 24, acquired the location September 21, 1878. The property was deeded to C. M. Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston. A frame church building was soon thereafter erected on this location.

The present church building was erected in 1894. The first pastor was Father John Lauth.

The Baptist Church bought the church site October 21, 1882, and soon afterwards erected a temporary church building. Later a substantial octagon shaped frame building was built. This building was destroyed by fire, and a brick building was erected in 1899. The first pastors were Revs. Joseph Gronda and J. B. McFarland.

The church property of the Baptist Church was deeded to the following trustees: John Threadgill, O. W. Patty and E. Rhodes.

The first property acquired by the Methodist Church for a building location was lot 6 in block 26, on Porter Street, deeded March 26, 1879. The lot was not built on by the church and was afterwards sold and the present location, lots 6 and 7, in block 21, was acquired by deed dated in 1885. The trustees named in the deed to the Talbot Street location were: J. M. McCartney, S. B. Williams, J. L. Pollock and M. Walters. A frame building was built in 1885 and used until a short time before the erection of the present brick building in 1900. Taylor was part of a Methodist circuit until about the fall of 1885 when Rev. John Barcus was appointed to the Taylor station, and half of the time given to Temple. Before this time services were conducted at the Odd Fellows' building and perhaps at other places before the church building was erected in 1885.

The St. James' Episcopal Church bought the northwest corner of block 42, May 26, 1892. The present building was erected soon thereafter. The church vestry at this time was composed of the following: P. M. Woodall, J. R. Boswell, D. K. Woodward, A. V. Doak and D. R. Meade.

The first pastors were Reverends Duncan and Lloyd.

The Swedish Methodist held service in their building on Howard

Street which they had purchased from the Cumberland Presbyterians. This property was sold and in 1910 the present site was acquired, lots 6, 7 and 8, in block 2, Murphy Addition.

The first pastor in 1900 was Rev. E. Severin. The first pastor at the present location was Rev. T. J. Westerberg.

The Saint Paul Lutheran Church property on lot 1 block 42, was acquired by deed dated January 15, 1917. Rev. A. Hartmann was the first pastor at this location. The denomination had previously for several years conducted services in their frame building in the western part of the city.

The Bohemian Lutherans have a frame church building on the corner of Cecelia and Sloan Streets. Rev. Joseph Barton was among the first pastors.

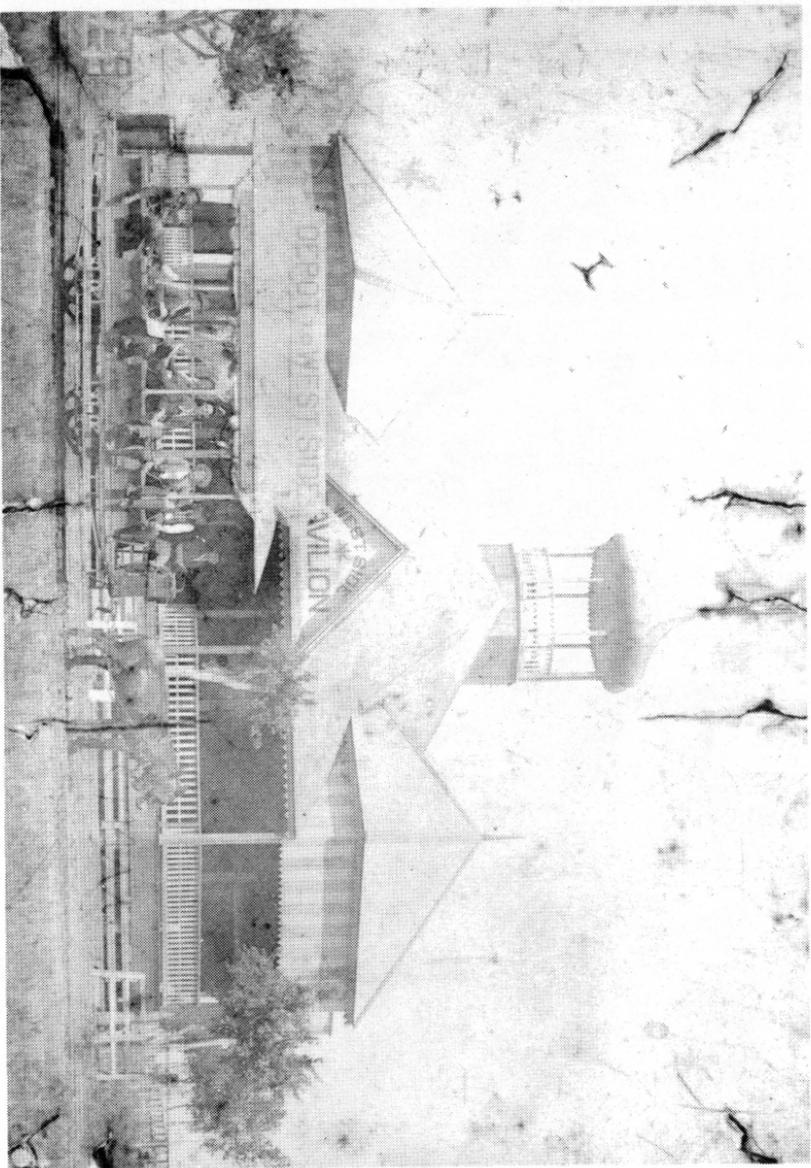
It should be explained that some of the denominations mentioned above held services before their first church buildings were constructed.

STREET CAR SYSTEM—1890

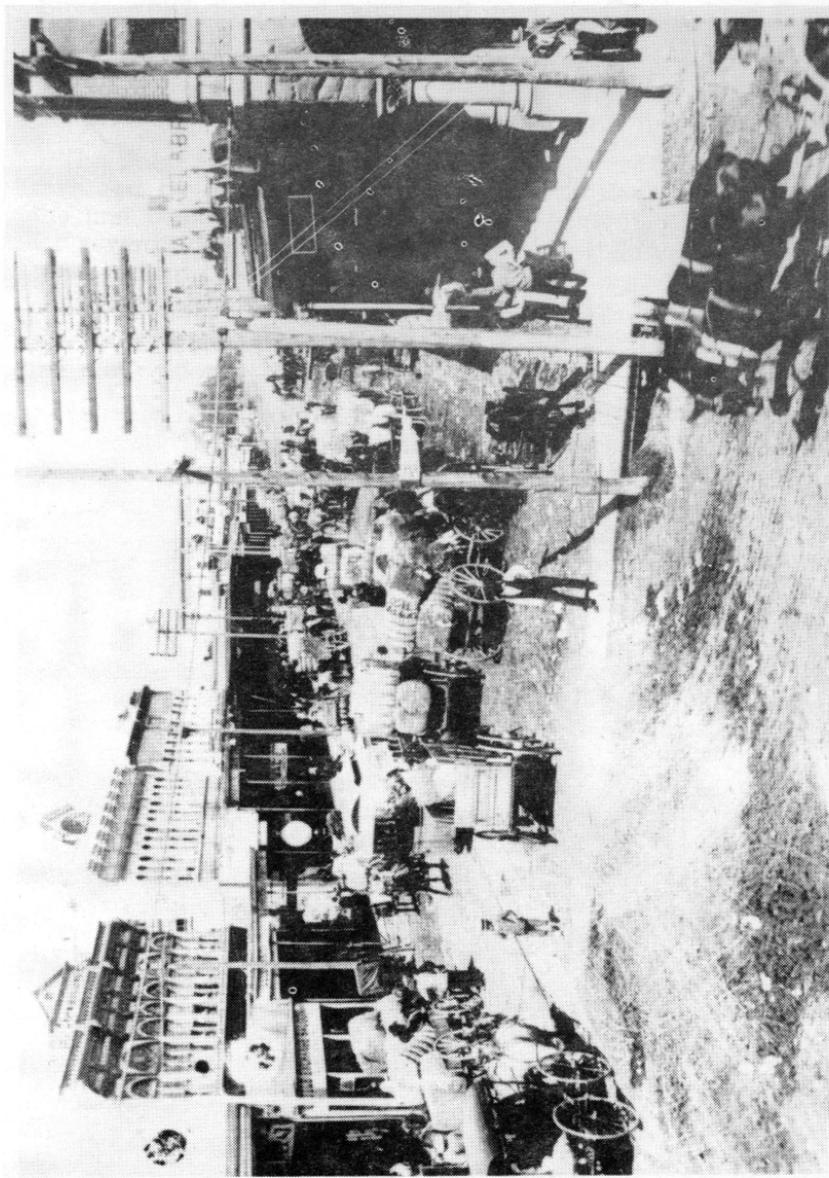
It is perhaps not generally known of late years that Taylor at one time had a street car line. It was owned by Dr. A. V. Doak. The line started on First Street at the intersection of Porter Street. It followed the street west to Main, north on Main to Seventh, west on Seventh to the Pavillion, located on the site of Dr. A. W. Gould's residence. Proceeding south on Sloan Street to Third Street, turning east to Doak Street and from there south to Second Street and thence east to the Main Street intersection of the line. The cars were small but adequate, each car was drawn by two Spanish mules. Two boards were placed on the inside of the track for the mules to walk on. The line was abandoned after a few years.

In concluding these sketches it should be said that the rich black lands surrounding Taylor, together with the favorable geographical location and the two trunk line railroads attracted a very fine type of early citizens. Many of them located nearby and engaged in ranching and farming.

It is hard to imagine the wonderful changes. With muddy streets and no side walks in the beginning, with scarcely any of the modern conveniences, we who remember these things of forty years ago can better appreciate the paved streets, sidewalks and other modern conveniences of today.



THE END OF THE LINE — 1890



MAIN STREET ABOUT 1900

THE CITY NATIONAL BANK OF TAYLOR

On February 10, 1900, John H. Griffith, Dr. R. H. Eanes, J. J. Thames, C. C. Hooper, S. A. Easley, H. T. Kimbro, and Robert D. Penn met and signed the Articles of Association, creating the City National Bank of Taylor. The Charter was issued on April 3, 1900, being signed by the then Comptroller of the Currency, Charles G. Dawes, and the bank opened for business on April 30, 1900. Capital Stock was \$50,000.00, and the doors opened for business in the building formerly occupied by Patterson Brothers and the Taylor Savings & Loan Association. This building was then a one story structure.

The first Board of Directors was composed of John H. Griffith, C. C. Hooper, S. A. Easley, J. J. Thames, C. A. Nelson, Dr. R. H. Eanes, Wm. Pfluger, H. T. Kimbro, and J. R. Hargis. Dr. Eanes served as the first President of the bank, with John H. Griffith being the Vice President and H. T. Kimbro Cashier.

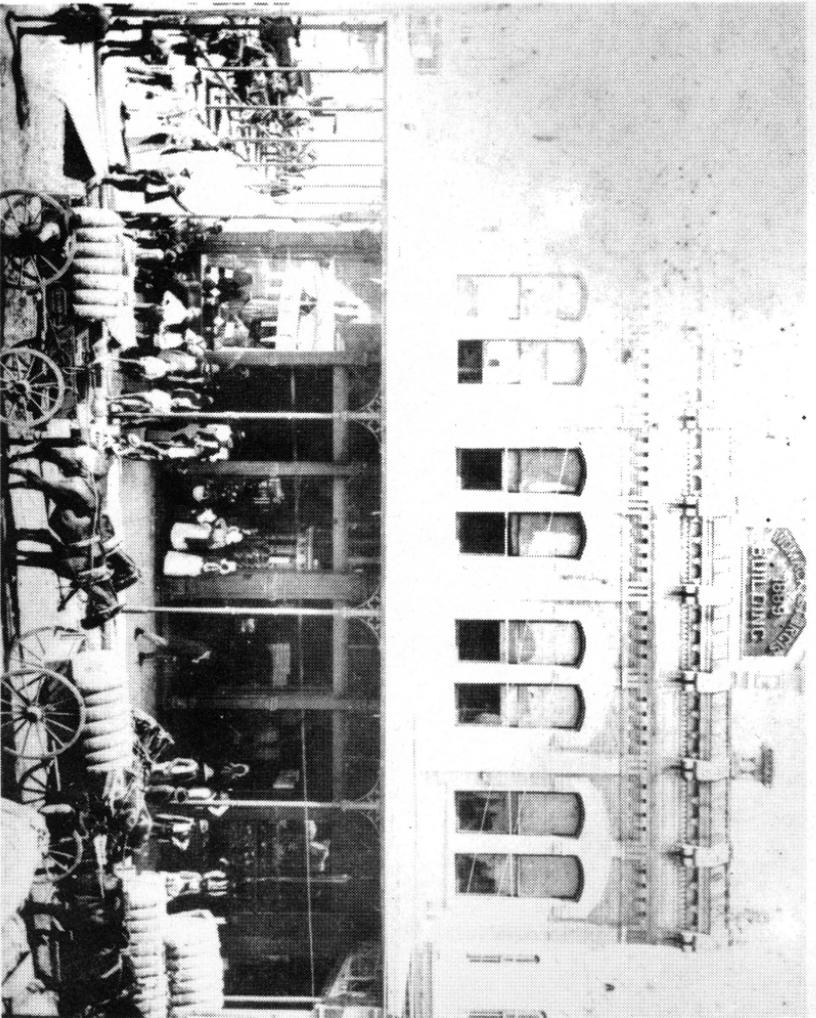
The City National occupied this first banking home until December 18, 1908, when the building at 210 North Main was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Duffy. This building was remodeled extensively in 1940, being marked by a large "Open House" on May 17, 1940. This building was the home of the bank until the present new edifice was occupied on May 13, 1965.

Dr. R. H. Eanes was the first President of the bank, and he served until January 19, 1909, when he was succeeded by Mr. J. J. Thames. Neither Dr. Eanes nor Mr. Thames served actively as an officer. On January 14, 1913, Mr. John H. Griffith was named President, and he served actively until January 9, 1940, when he became Chairman of the Board of Directors. He served in this capacity until his death in 1944. John M. Griffith was the bank's President from January, 1940, to January, 1972, when he became Chairman of the Board, and was succeeded by Ed C. Griffith, the fifth President in the bank's 75 year history.

Among those who have been Directors of the bank, in addition to those composing the original and the present Boards are M. R. Kennedy, M. F. Klattenhoff, T. J. Lawhon, James Shaw, J. S. Jones, Dr. Edmond Doak, C. S. Griffith, Mrs. T. J. Lawhon, D. F. Forwood, C. W. Pfluger, T. J. Lawhon, Jr., J. P. Prewitt, H. A. Lettermann, Thos. W. Holmstrom and Roy Camblin. Among those who served as active Officers, in addition to the present Officers, are H. T. Kimbro, James Shaw, E. M. Grimes, H. A. Lettermann, Thos. W. Holmstrom, Roy Camblin, J. H. Miles, C. W. Pfluger, Jr., and Gene Sefcik.

On November 16, 1911, the Capital Stock was increased to \$100,000.00 from the original \$50,000.00. Then on January 22, 1954, a 100% stock dividend was paid to the Shareholders, bringing the Capital to \$200,000.00. In January, 1968, another 100% stock dividend was declared, raising the Capital to \$400,000.00 and Surplus Fund to \$400,000.00. Again, on January 11, 1974, another 100% stock dividend was passed, making Capital \$800,000.00, and Surplus was also raised to \$800,000.00. On December 31, 1974, Capital and Surplus totaled \$1,600,000.00, with Undivided Profits and Reserves of \$399,258.75. Deposits on this date were \$20,430,045.69. The bank has never merged or consolidated with any other institution.

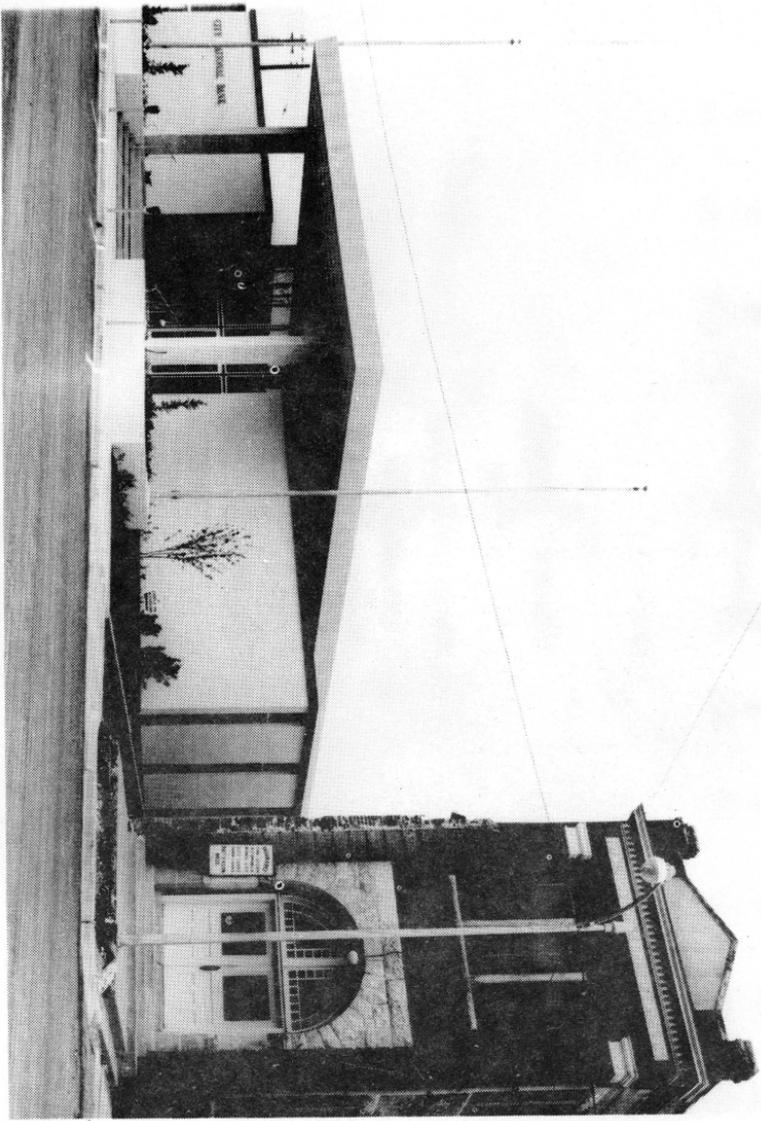
The present Board of Directors is composed of Dr. R. G. Garrett, John M. Griffith, John M. Griffith, Jr., Ed C. Griffith, C. W. Pfluger, Jr., R. J. Bartosh, Dr. Jay J. Johns, Mrs. Lee R. Lawrence, Ray P. Lewis, T. F. Pierce, Louis B. Prewitt, Alex W. Klattenhoff and Emery C. Teichelman. Officers of the bank are John M. Griffith, Chairman of the Board; Ed C. Griffith, President; Alex W. Klattenhoff and Emery C. Teichelman, Vice Presidents; Walton E. Slivensky, Cashier; Brady Marshall and Gene Olson, Asst. Vice Presidents; and Mrs. Lou Bergstrom, Mrs. Corinne Haverland, Mrs. Doris Randig, and Mrs. Astrid Zizinia, Asst. Cashiers.



AN EARLY DAY STORE



OUR HOME - 1909 to 1965



OUR THIRD AND FIRST BANKING HOUSES

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