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### The 1930s: The Decade that Changed Tyler.

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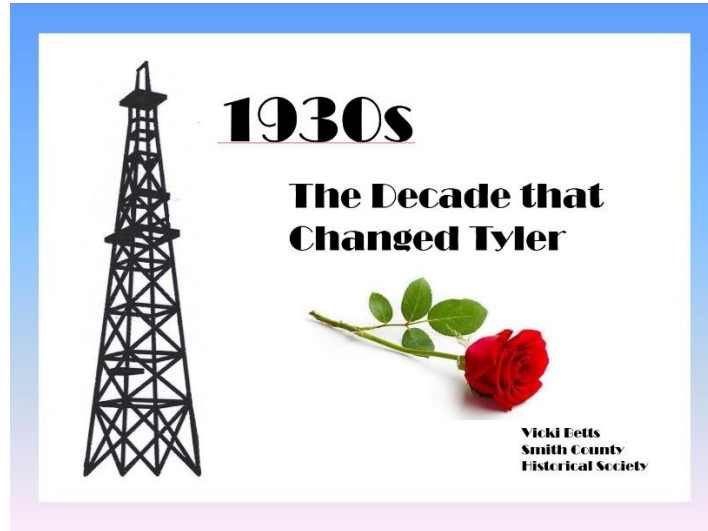
"The 1930s: The Decade that Changed Tyler." Presentation to Smith County Historical Society, March 1, 2022.

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## The 1930s: The Decade that Changed Tyler

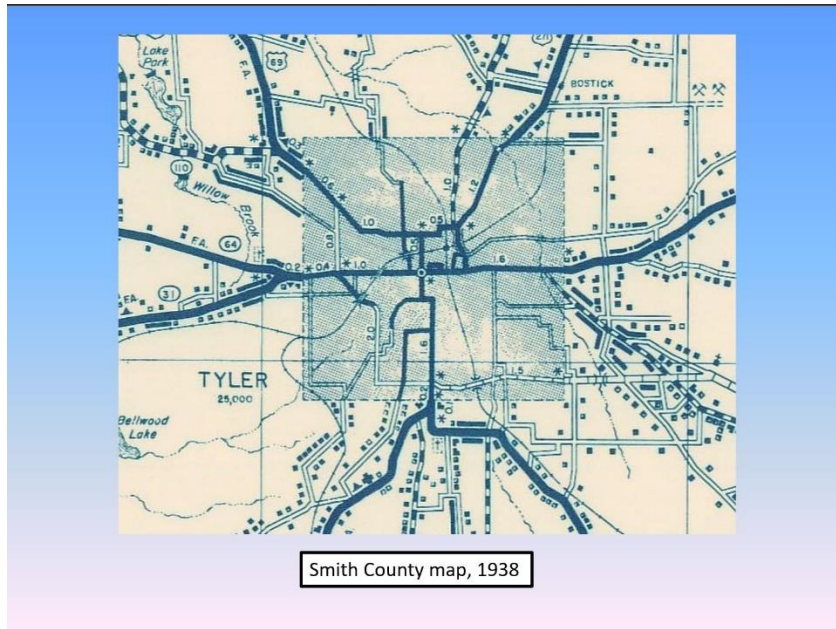
Vicki Betts  
Smith County Historical Society  
March 1, 2022

Note: All photographs are from the Archives of the Smith County Historical Society unless otherwise noted.



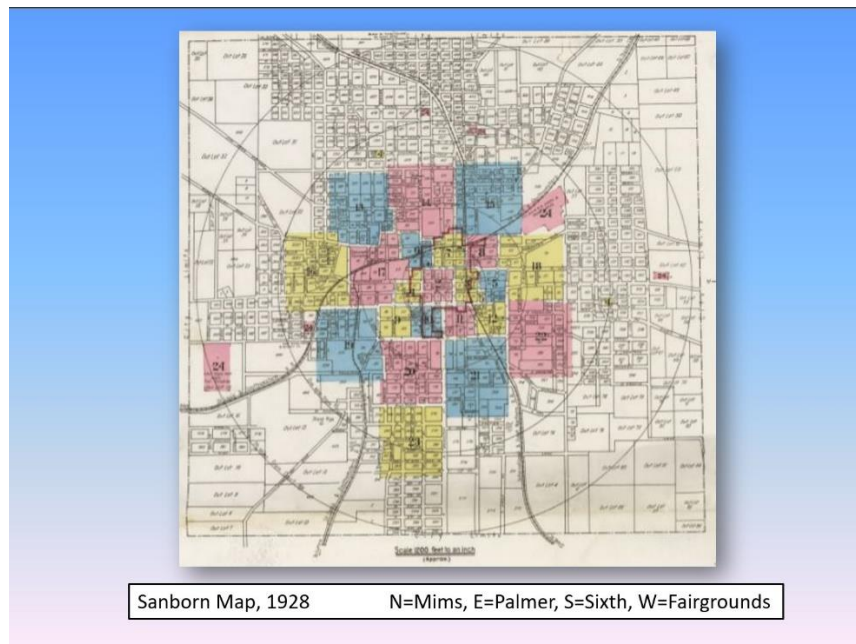
Tyler and Smith County were established by the Texas State Legislature in 1846, so legally they are each 176 years old even though it took a few years to get up and going. Tyler has been through multiple wars, starting with the Civil War. It has gone from a cotton and corn agricultural economy to now largely a medical, educational, and retail community. Out of all those years, with all of those changes, which decade made the biggest difference? I would say the 1930s, and I'll show you through few maps and a LOT of photographs, why I would say that.

In the 1930 census Tyler had an official population of 17,113, or roughly the size of present-day Palestine. This was the first time Tyler had beat out Marshall, and we were very proud of that fact. The city was 24% African American, with 12 "others" and 19 born in Mexico. Smith County had 53,123 people, so we were still predominantly rural.



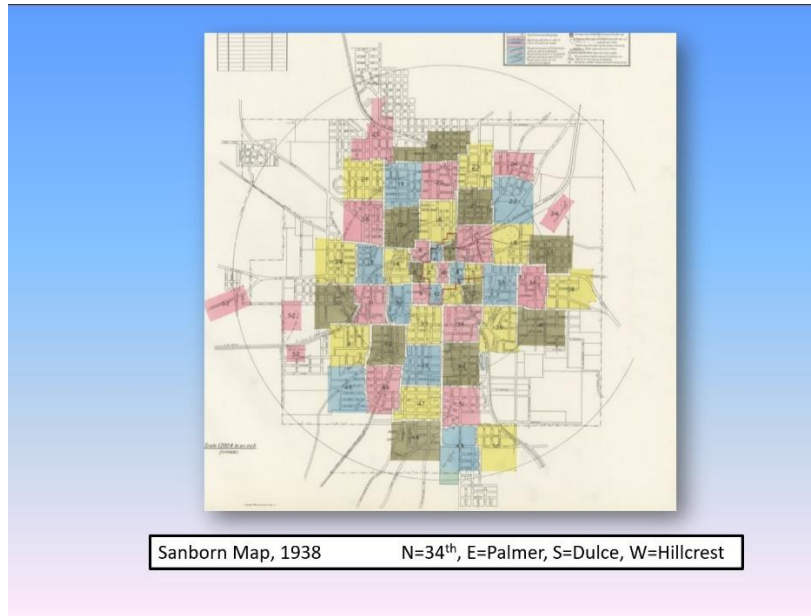
Smith County map, 1938

Here's the 1938 highway map with Tyler in the center. The city limits did not reach quite down to Rose Hill Cemetery—that's the abrupt turn where Broadway ended and turned east to become the Troup Highway. The road going off to the southwest is now known as the Old Jacksonville Highway, but there was no NEW Jacksonville Highway, or 69, yet. The main east west road was Erwin, not Front. Willow Brook is outside of the city limits.



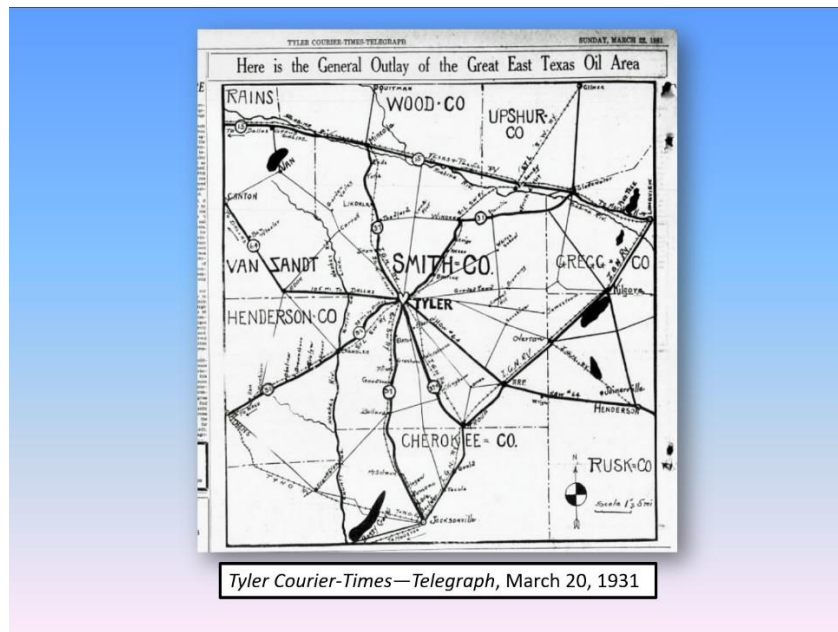
Sanborn Map, 1928      N=Mims, E=Palmer, S=Sixth, W=Fairgrounds

This is the key page to the 1928 Sanborn map. Sanborn Maps were fire insurance maps, so there are very detailed pages for each of the colored areas. On the north is Mims, the east is Palmer, the south is Sixth Street, and the pink to the west is the Fairgrounds. If you would ever like to explore these maps they are online at the University of Texas at Austin.

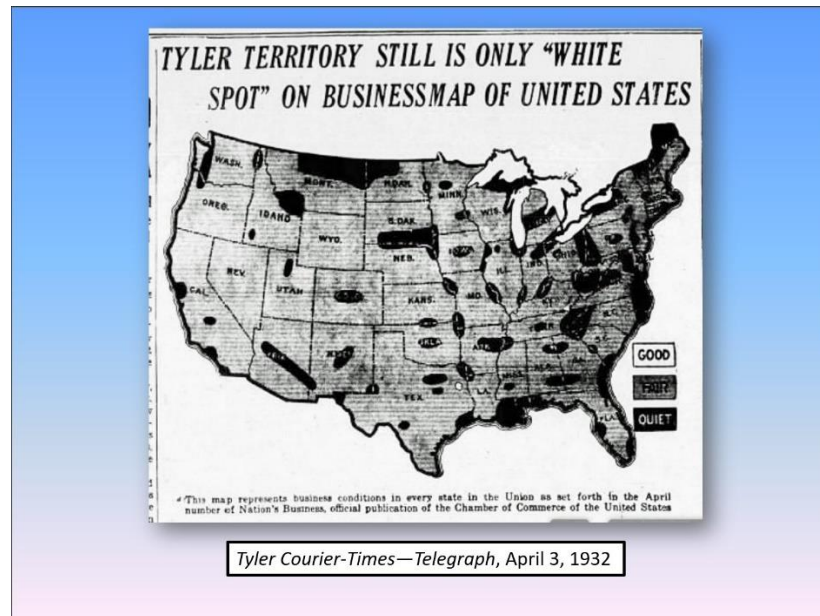


Now skip to the 1938 Sanborn map. The north is now 34<sup>th</sup> Street which takes in Texas College Heights. On the east is still Palmer. On the south it's Dulce south of Rose Hill Cemetery, and on the west is Hillcrest. Not a huge difference, but many of the interior blocks are more developed.

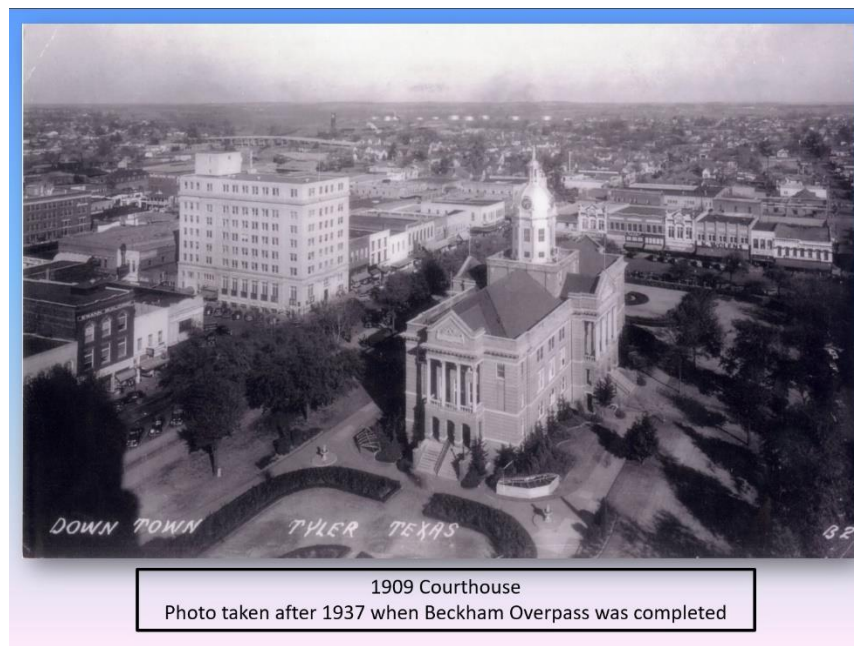
The 1932 city directory said that "Agriculture always has been and always will be the leading industry, with livestock raising and dairying coming to the front rapidly during the past few years. Now oil is adding quite a big industry to the city."



Indeed! The first successful well in the Van Oil Field had come in on October 13, 1929, and Daisy Bradford #3 brought in the East Texas Oil Field on September 5, 1930. The first successful well in Smith County belonged to Guy Lewis. It was drilled in 1931 and nothing would ever be the same.



On April 3, 1932 the immediate Tyler area was the only "white spot" on the map denoting good business conditions, in the entire United States as the Great Depression worsened. Oil executives, geologists, lease hounds, attorneys, and suppliers flocked to Tyler which was just far enough away from the oil fields themselves to be appealing. By 1940 Tyler would have 28,279 people, up 65% in just ten years.



The heart of the community was the downtown square and surrounding blocks. In the center was the wonderful 1909 county courthouse surrounded by trees, grass, and flower beds. Just to the north, on the corner of North Broadway and East Ferguson, was the Citizens National Bank Building, constructed in 1924 with an office building addition in 1932 just after the Oil Boom hit. This photo was taken after 1937 when the Beckham Street Viaduct was built.

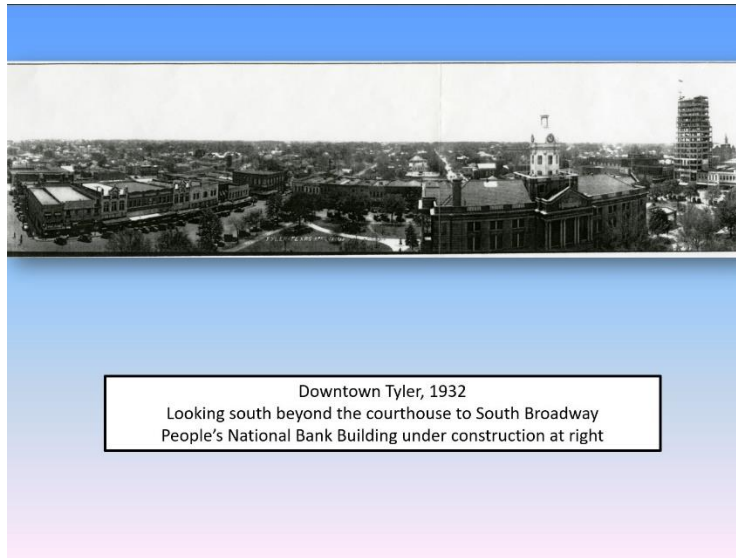




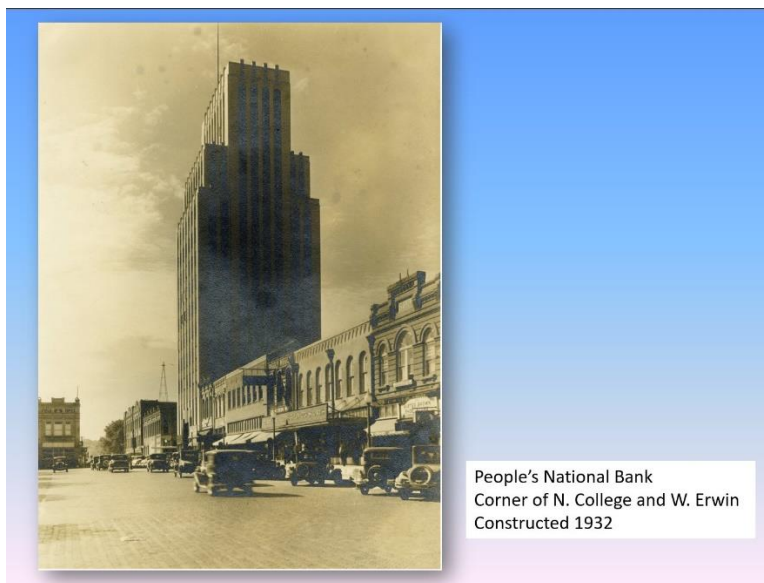
Beckham Street Viaduct  
1937



Here's an aerial view of the downtown area with the courthouse in the center. We're looking slightly northwest.



On the corner of College and West Erwin the Peoples National Bank built the tallest building west of the Mississippi River in 1932.



We also had Tyler State Bank and Trust Company providing financial services.



Blackstone Hotel  
 Corner of N. Broadway and E. Locust  
 Constructed 1922

Up North Broadway was the Blackstone Hotel, built in 1922. It became the location of many oil deals as well as all sorts of social events. They added on in 1931 and then added on again with an office building with the interstate bus terminal on the ground floor.



Looking north on Broadway toward railroad tracks.  
 Note painted arrow toward Airport on top of building to left.  
 Blackstone Hotel to right.

Here's another view of the Blackstone on the right with the tall sign. On the roof of one of the buildings to the left there's an arrow painted to direct pilots to the airfield west of town. North Broadway narrowed before it got to the railroad tracks.





Hotel Tyler  
East Ferguson off square

This is the Hotel Tyler on East Ferguson. In 1932 there were only four hotels in town with a total of 280 rooms. More would be added during the decade, as well as tourist courts including Alamo Plaza, one of the first in the nation.



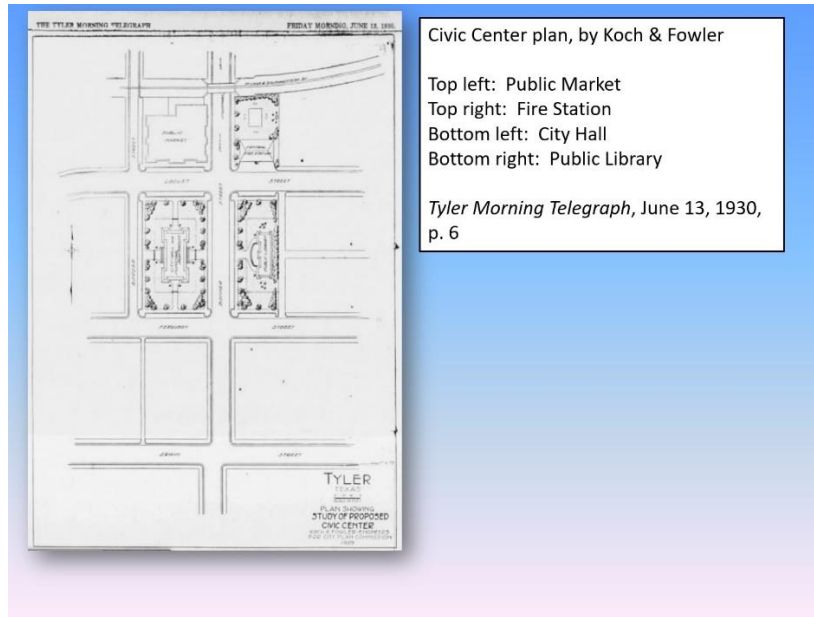
Tyler Post Office and Federal Courthouse  
Corner of W. Ferguson and N. Bois d'Arc  
Torn down in 1933

The old Tyler post office and federal courthouse was on the corner of Ferguson and Bois d'arc.



Tyler Post Office and Federal Courthouse  
Corner of W. Ferguson and N. Bois d'Arc  
Constructed 1933-34

It was torn down in 1933 and replaced by a very imposing structure funded by the federal government. It is still in use as part of the federal courthouse although it no longer houses the main post office.

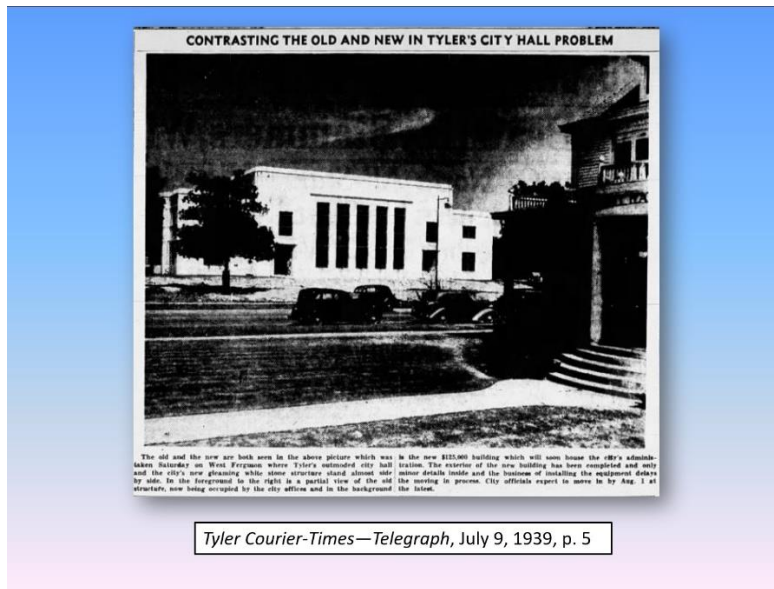


Civic Center plan, by Koch & Fowler

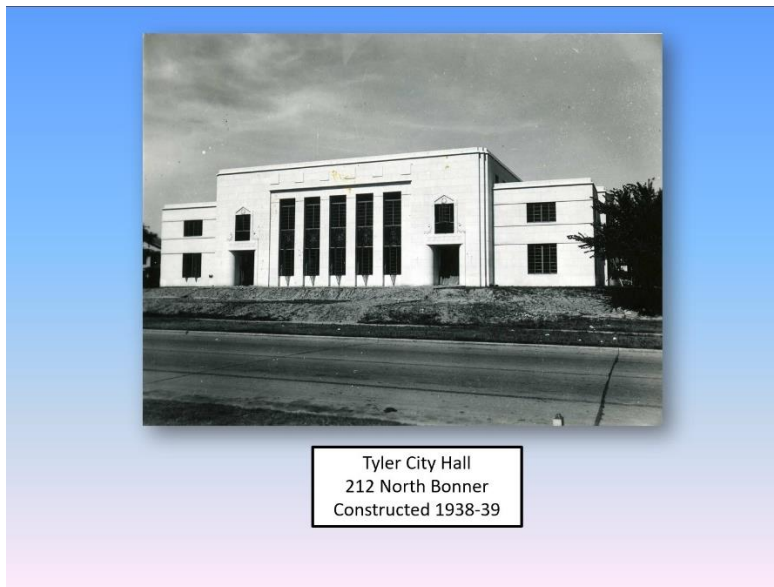
Top left: Public Market  
Top right: Fire Station  
Bottom left: City Hall  
Bottom right: Public Library

*Tyler Morning Telegraph*, June 13, 1930,  
p. 6

In 1929 the city hired Koch and Fowler, engineers, of Dallas to develop a plan for the development of Tyler. Parts appeared in the Tyler paper in 1930. This is the proposal for a Civic Center plan with a city market, fire station, public library, and city hall.



Tyler's City Hall had long been an embarrassment. A bond issue and Public Works Administration grant provided the funding for the building that is still in use today built in 1938-1939 on North Bonner. This newspaper image shows the old city hall in a house on the right, and the new city hall.



And here's our city hall soon after it was completed.



Fire Station #2  
Hillside Park on East Erwin  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph*, December 2, 1934, p. 85

In the 1930s Tyler added Fire Station #2 at Hillside Park while keeping #1 in what was known as the World's Tallest Two Story Building downtown.



Smith County Jail  
110 South Spring  
Constructed in 1916, in use during the 1930s

The jail on South Spring had been constructed in 1916 and was still in use. The front steps made a great photo op to display the most recent raid on area moonshiners. 3.2% beer was legal in Smith County for most of the 1930s, but moonshine was not. In fact, the copper from one moonshine still was used to make the time capsule for the Woman's Building, which will be mentioned later. In 1932 Tyler had 17 policemen and 17 firemen, each department with eight vehicles.

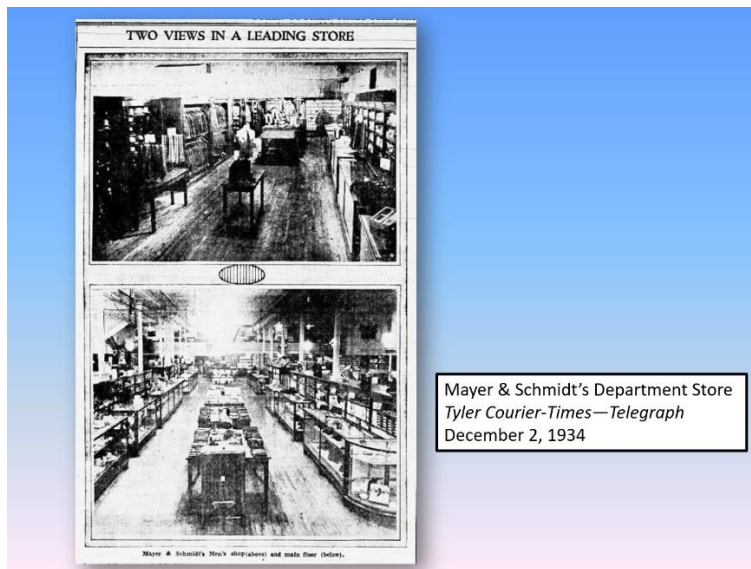
The 1932 City directory says that there were over 300 retail merchants in Tyler, with most of them centered around the square and down the adjoining streets. A few grocery and convenience type stores were scattered around the suburbs within walking distance of homes.





Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph, March 5, 1939, sect. 3, p. 1

Mayer & Schmidt's Department Store had been in Tyler since 1889.



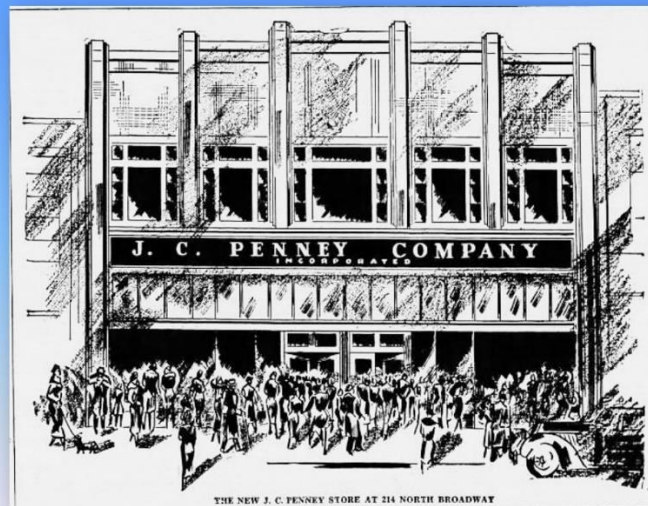
Mayer & Schmidt's Department Store  
Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph  
December 2, 1934

It was considered the top department store in town.



W. Ferguson looking toward N. College and Citizens National Bank  
Mayer & Schmidt on left, remodeled in 1937

It completed an exterior remodeling in 1937 that brought it up to date with stores in much larger cities. See it here on the left with the black stone face and awnings. We also had Sears-Roebuck, Montgomery Wards, and J. C. Penney.



THE NEW J. C. PENNEY STORE AT 214 NORTH BROADWAY

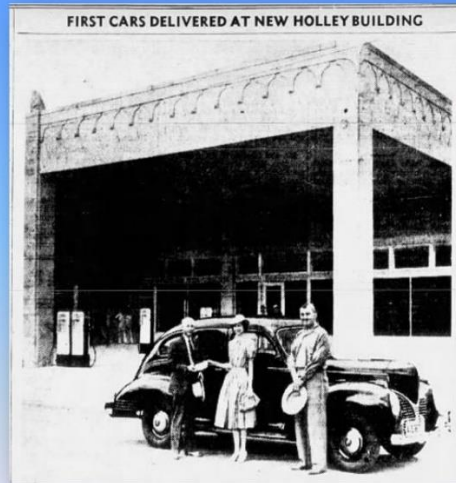
*Tyler Morning Telegraph*, June 5, 1935

Col. Roebuck of Sears was so impressed with Tyler on his 1935 visit that the company donated funds for the amphitheater at Bergfeld Park.



Northwest side of Square  
W. Ferguson looking east toward Broadway  
Light colored building midway is Citizens National Bank

Here's a view of the northwest side of the square on a busy day. That's McLellan's variety store on the left, Tyler Guaranty State Bank, and the tall building is Citizens National Bank where Regions Bank is now.



Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph  
June 4, 1939

Holley Motor Company opened their dealership on South Broadway in 1939—the building is still there.



Hooker-Horn Chevrolet, West Erwin  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph, December 2, 1934*


Hooker & Horn sold Chevrolets on West Erwin.



Mecca Café, owned by the Haddad Brothers  
 110 East Ferguson

Downtown, the depot area, and points in between were also the locations of many of Tyler's restaurants, cafes, and sandwich shops. The Mecca Café, owned by the Lebanese Haddad brothers, was on East Ferguson and was very nice. Cameron Cafeteria was air conditioned.






**Ashby's Cafe**  
 FERGUSON ST. ON THE SQUARE  
 TYLER, TEXAS

Tyler Courier-Times, March 22, 1931, p. 53

Here's Ashby's Café also on the north side of the square.



**EAT AT THE TAVERN**  
 320 South Broadway  
 Lunch and Dinner served regularly every day.  
 Lunch 12 to 2      Dinner 6 to 9  
 Catering to Luncheons and Dinner Parties  
 a specialty.

Tyler Courier-Times, March 13, 1932, p. 22

And the Tavern at 320 South Broadway.

**Bowling Alley Cafe Is New and Attractive**



Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph,  
 January 8, 1933, p. 8

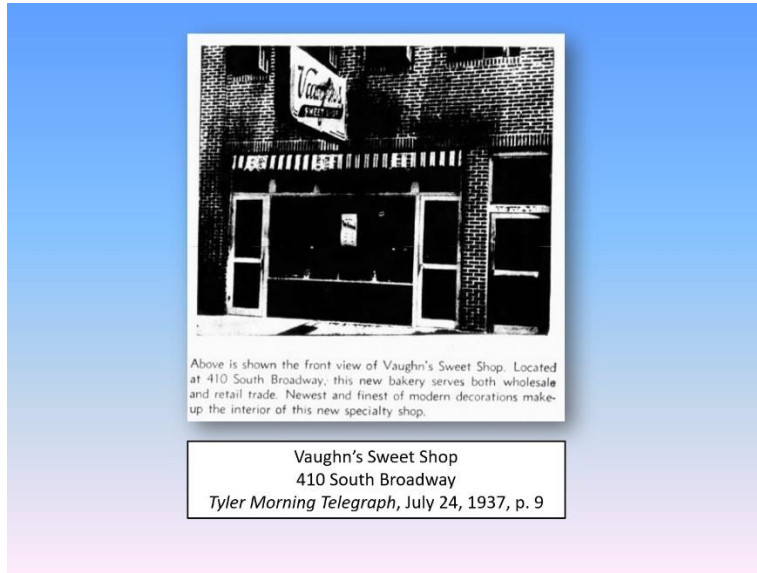
A lifetime of cafe experience, combined with a sincere desire to give the public the best and most appetizing foods the market affords, is the explanation offered for the instant popularity and continued success of the Bowling Alley Cafe on South Broadway, opposite the Blackstone Hotel. It is owned and operated by W. L. Luttrell and G. B. McMurtry, both formerly of Houston, and employs seven persons.

All equipment is of the finest type obtainable, including electric refrigeration, and is approved by the highest sanitary authorities. The best imported and domestic foodstuffs are selected with the greatest care for the cafe's clientele, yet prices are more than moderate, quality considered. An excellent plate lunch is offered daily for 26 cents, with an evening meal, including salad and dessert, at 35 cents.

Savory roast meats, tantalizing sea foods in season, zesty relishes and dainty sandwiches, as well as the more substantial dishes for the outdoor type of man, provide a constant variety of tasty fare which will appeal to all.

A cordial invitation is extended by the owners to all residents of Tyler and surrounding centers to drop in and try the numerous specials which are offered daily at the Bowling Alley Cafe.

Even the bowling alley had a café.

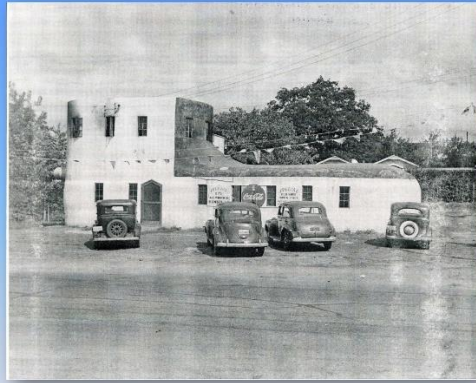


And for dessert, Vaughn's Sweet Shop, 410 South Broadway.

Mexican food had been advertised in Tyler as early as 1908, but it really came into its own in the 30s. Lupe's Mexicano Café, on Swann Street, just on the north side of the railroad tracks, was the first all Mexican food restaurant in 1933. El Charro on East Erwin opened in 1937. We also had some rather interesting restaurants out in the suburbs.



The Brown Derby Restaurant, constructed in 1935 and modeled after the one in California, was located on South Broadway about where Mentoring Alliance is now.



Old Shoe Restaurant  
1604 West Erwin  
Constructed 1936

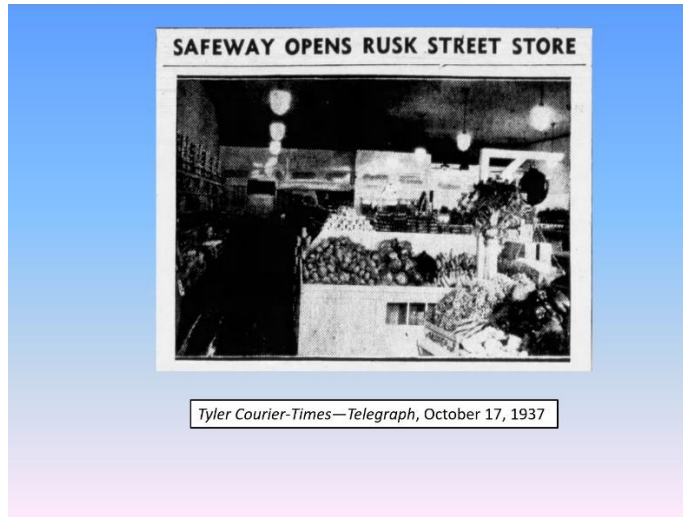
The Old Shoe Restaurant was on West Erwin near Glenwood and was built in 1936.

We had four movie theaters, all talkies by then—the Queen, the Majestic, the Arcadia, and the Liberty. The Arcadia is now a law office and the Liberty still hosts films and events. The Tyler Theater came in 1940.



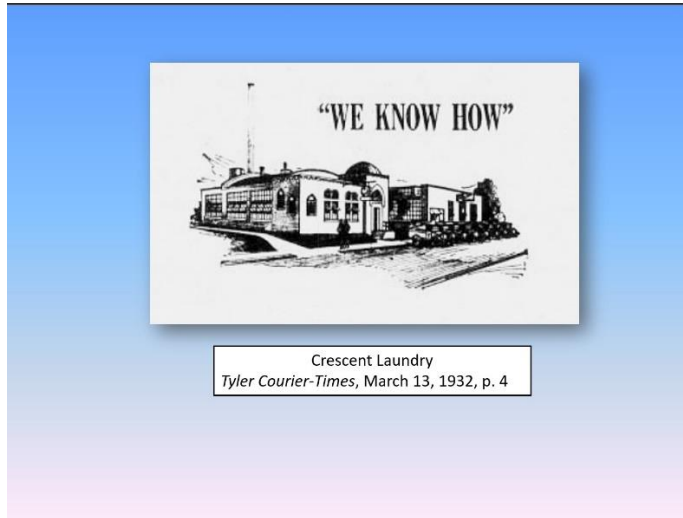
Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph  
November 3, 1939

Of course Brookshire's Grocery Store was here by the 1930s. Their first self-service store was on the east side of the square and opened in 1928. By 1939 they had stores all over town. These are photos of the 1939 store on the corner of Broadway and Front which became a favorite for high school and college students who could walk over from their campus on College Street.

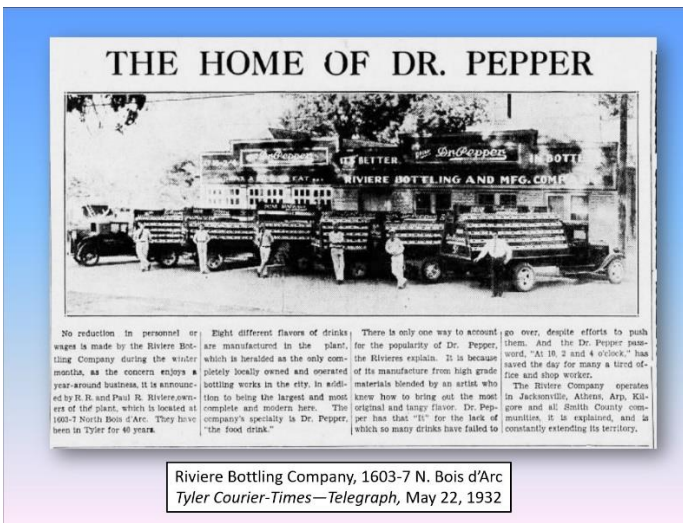


Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph, October 17, 1937

Safeway opened a store on Rusk Street.  
Other businesses were:



Crescent Laundry  
Tyler Courier-Times, March 13, 1932, p. 4



No reduction in personnel or wages is made by the Riviere Bottling Company during the winter months, as the concern enjoys a year-around business. It is announced by R. R. and Paul R. Riviere, owners of the plant, which is located at 1603-7 North Bois d'Arc. They have been in Tyler for 40 years.

Eight different flavors of drinks are manufactured in the plant, which is heralded as the only completely locally owned and operated bottling works in the city. In addition to being the largest and most complete and modern here. The company's specialty is Dr. Pepper, "the food drink."

There is only one way to account for the popularity of Dr. Pepper, the Rivieres explain. It is because of its manufacture from high grade materials blended by an artist who knows how to bring out the most original and tasty flavor. Dr. Pepper has that "B" for the lack of which so many drinks have failed to

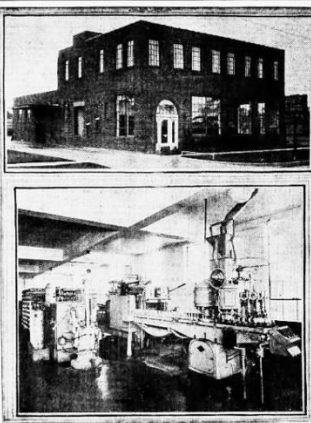
go over, despite efforts to push them. And the Dr. Pepper password, "At 10, 2 and 4 o'clock," has saved the day for many a lured office and shop worker.

The Riviere Company operates in Jacksonville, Atlanta, Ariz., Killebrew and all Smith County communities. It is explained, and is constantly extending its territory.

Riviere Bottling Company, 1603-7 N. Bois d'Arc  
Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph, May 22, 1932




**NEW HOME OF COCA-COLA CO. IN CITY**



Coca-Cola Bottling Co., West Erwin  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph,*  
 December 2, 1934

The lines of the Coca-Cola building which is under construction in the city. The building is a three-story structure of brick with a prominent corner entrance. The interior view shows a large industrial space with several large machines, likely bottling equipment, and a high ceiling with exposed beams.

**A PIONEER TYLER LUMBER BUSINESS**



Carlton Lumber Company, N. Broadway and Line  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph,* December 2, 1934

One of the oldest business institutions in Tyler is the Carlton Lumber Company located at the intersection of Broadway and Line streets. Above is shown the office building. He assumed this position a few months ago following the death of Sid Carlton who had been president several years. The company carries a complete line of building supplies, paints and all essentials for construction.

**ONE OF TYLER'S MODERN JEWELRY STORES**



Dickason-Gerard Jewelry  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph,*  
 December 2, 1934

A successful jewelry business is conducted in the modern 1000 square foot store which the Dickason-Gerard Jewelry Co. occupies in the city. The store is a two-story building with a prominent entrance. The interior view shows a long, narrow store with display cases on both sides and a counter in the center. The store is well-lit and has a clean, modern appearance.



Nunnelee-Florence Furniture  
308 South Broadway  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph,*  
December 2, 1934

**Serving East Texas from  
The Oil Capital of the World**

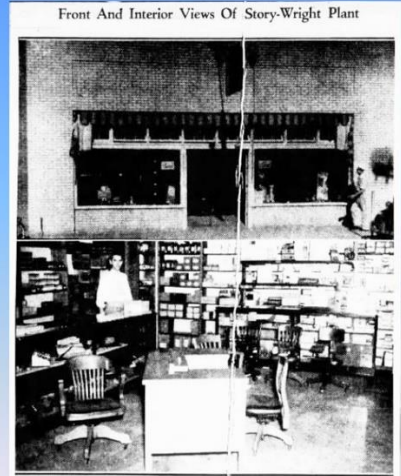
W. E. Nunnelee and Gus Florence, composing the Nunnelee-Florence Furniture Company have been serving the people of East Texas for a number of years, being pioneers in the line business before their entrance into the furniture field of endeavor.

Four and one-half years ago Messrs. Nunnelee and Florence embarked in the furniture business on a very small scale.

Today they maintain one of the most modern stores of the kind in this section. It is housed in a beautiful two story brick structure located on one of the city's main thoroughfares.

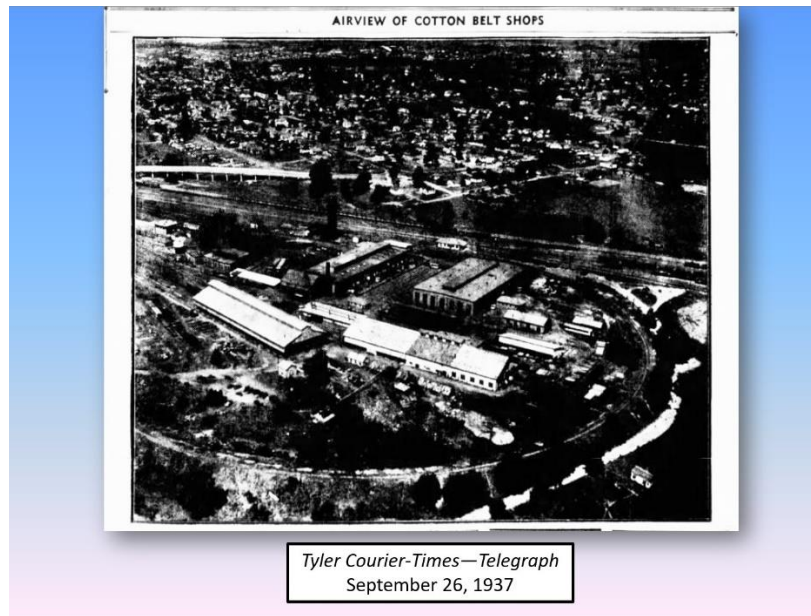
Messrs. Nunnelee and Florence cordially invite your early inspection of their store.

**NUNNELEE-FLORENCE FURNITURE CO.**  
308 South Broadway TYLER, TEXAS Phone 247

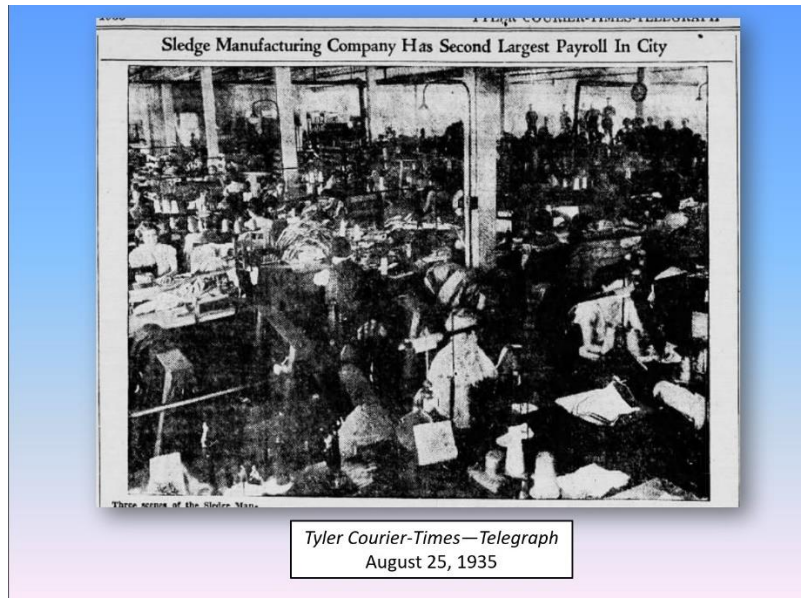


Story-Wright—"The Business man's  
department store"  
*Tyler Morning Telegraph,*  
July 19, 1937

Two views of the Story-Wright here popularly called "the best" supplies available there. Recent ad-  
vertising campaign. The plant of-  
fices machine department store, has  
been of machinery here increased  
year after year, the front, bottom  
the interior. The establishment has  
made of the complete stock of office the printing service within the plant



The biggest employer in Tyler was the Cotton Belt railroad shops on the northeast side of downtown. It had a payroll of a half million dollars annually, which was quite impressive at that time. The labor was nearly all unionized.



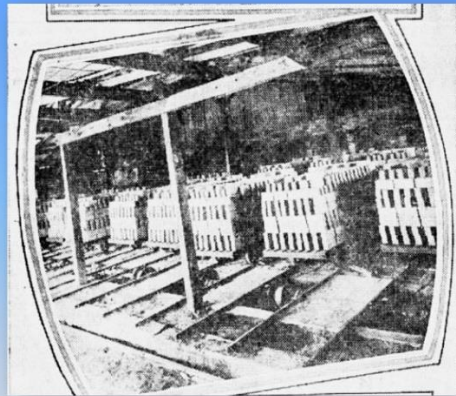
The second largest employer was Sledge Manufacturing Company which made men's work clothing. It employed 300 people, mostly women, with 250 sewing machines, making 2000 dozen garments per week. Siegel Manufacturing Company made women's house dresses.



Into a temporary home went the Day Nursery Saturday. It was not as nice as the old, from which the children were forced to move to make way for a new city hall. The house is so close to the railroad tracks at 407 North Bois d'Arc that another assistant is required to watch children at play. The board of directors of the nursery has been given another lot by the city, but as yet there are no funds to build a permanent day home for Tommy and many such like him.—Kenneth Gunn.

Tyler Day Nursery, temporary location  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph*, November 6, 1938, p. 10

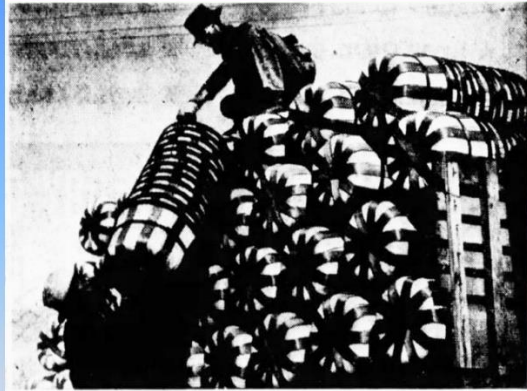
With that number of women employed outside of the home, local leaders saw the need to create the Tyler Day Nursery to take care of children of working mothers. Other industries included



Reliance Clay Products (brick)  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph*, December 2, 1934

Reliance Clay Products which made brick,



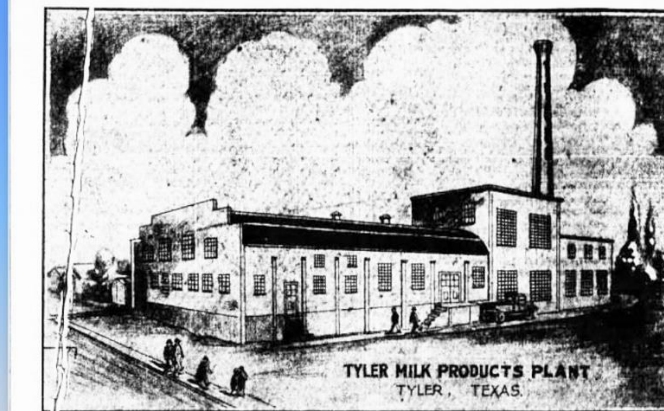


—Staff Photo by Kenneth Goss.

Daily 3,600 baskets go out from the East Texas Crate & Basket Manufacturing company to be used in the packing of farm products. The plant employs 112 persons and has an annual payroll of approximately \$75,000.

East Texas Crate and Basket Manufacturing Company  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph*, November 27, 1938, p. 4

East Texas Crate and Basket which supplied local fruit and vegetable growers,



*Tyler Courier-Times*, March 22, 1931, p. 45

Tyler Milk Products Company,





Ideal Bakery



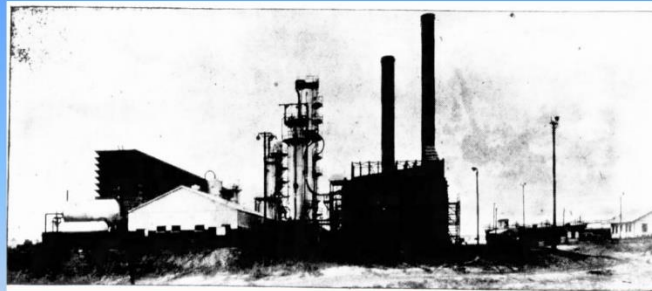
Byrd Pottery



Southern Ice and Utilities Company

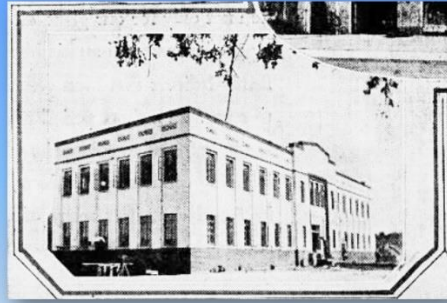
Southern Ice and Utilities,

Smith County Cotton Oil and Fertilizer Company, and Woldert Allied Industries which processed and shipped fruit, peanuts, and pecans from the largest pecan orchard in the world at that time, near Winona. The remnants are still there.



McMurrey Refinery  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph*, December 2, 1934, p. 48

McMurrey Refinery, now Delek, developed on the Longview Road east of town.



Humble Oil Building  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph*, December 2, 1934, p. 85

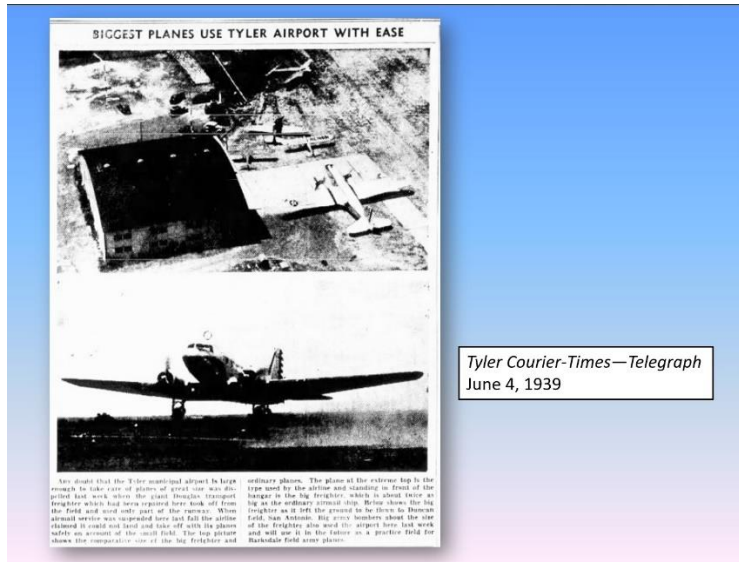
Humble Oil built their own office building in town.

Tyler Pipe & Foundry and Western Foundry were outside of town to the north.

As far as transportation went, highways were just being paved to connect Tyler with Dallas and Kilgore. Even in Tyler in 1932 we had 185 miles of streets, but only 20 of those were paved.

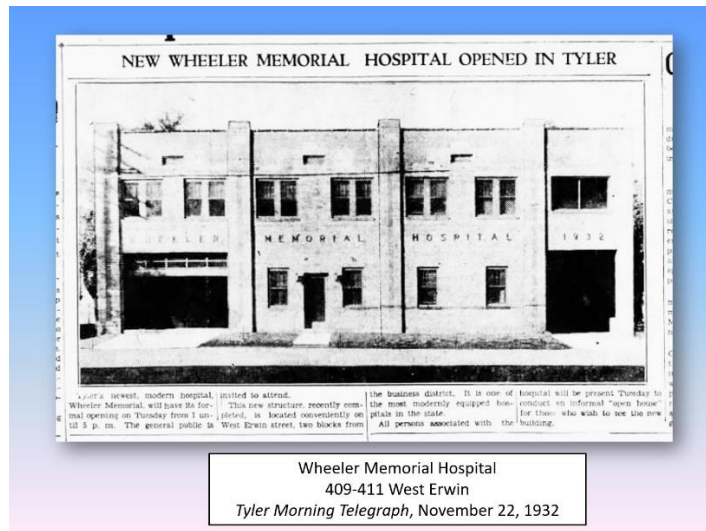


Passenger and freight trains were still very important—we had both the Cotton Belt and the Missouri Pacific coming to the depot on North Spring. Intercity buses came through regularly.

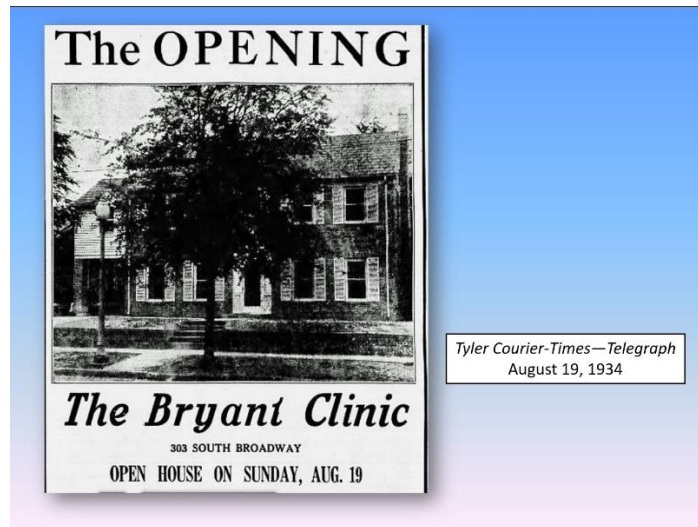


Tyler had seen airplanes since before World War I but it wasn't until 1929 that the city purchased land west of Tyler for an airport. Even then they were hesitant to make the investments in runways and beacons necessary for regular Delta flights or airmail. It was a continual financial battle, even with a hangar on site.

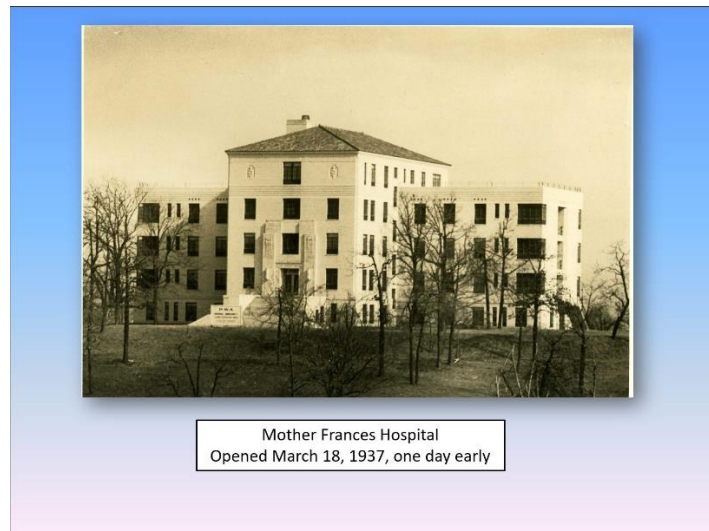
That same financial battle was fought over the years before Tyler had a real hospital. Early on the Cotton Belt railroad had its own hospital that would accept other patients if needed, but that was moved to Texarkana. For a number of years small groups of doctors would open private hospitals—in 1932 we had two, totaling only 28 beds.



Wheeler Memorial Hospital opened in 1932 on West Erwin,



and the Bryant Clinic opened in 1934 on South Broadway. Finally, with funds from the Public Works Administration, a bond issue, and the Sisters of Nazareth to run the facility,



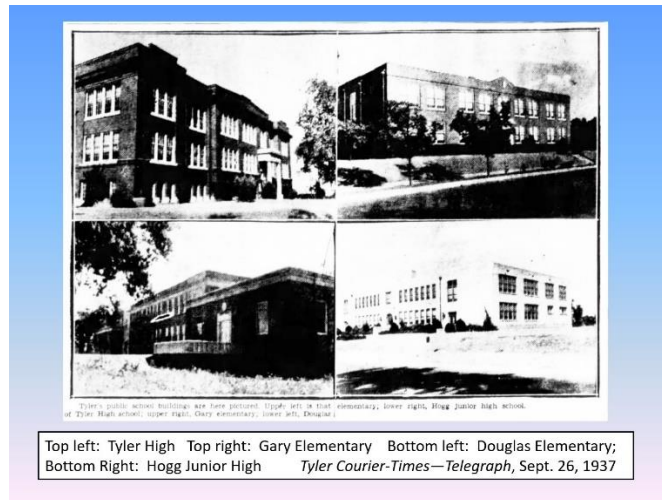
Mother Frances Hospital opened on March 18, 1937, one day before their formal dedication, to treat the teachers and students injured in the New London School explosion.

While we have COVID, the disease that could shut down a Tyler school in the 1930s was diphtheria. Malaria was the predominant disease, carried by mosquitoes, so government programs paid to have Blackfork Creek ditched and the streams in South Tyler rocked in to prevent stagnant pools.

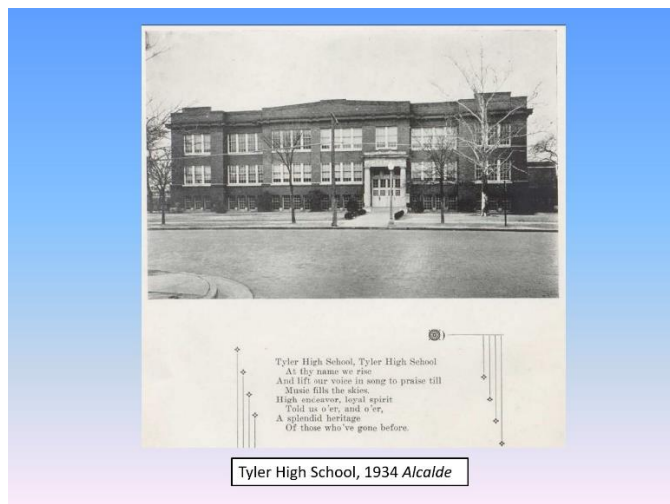




Other diseases mentioned were smallpox, rabies, whooping cough, German measles, polio, and influenza.



Tyler's public schools faced 1930 in fairly good condition. They had Tyler High School for Whites





Tyler High School, 1935 Alcalde



Tyler High School, 1937 Alcalde

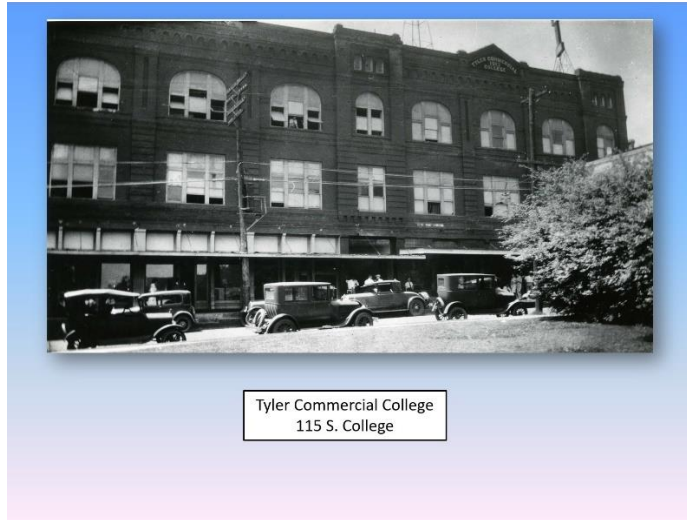
and Emmett Scott High School for African-Americans. I have not been able to find a photo of the Emmett Scott High School in the 1930s.



Hogg Junior High School, South Broadway

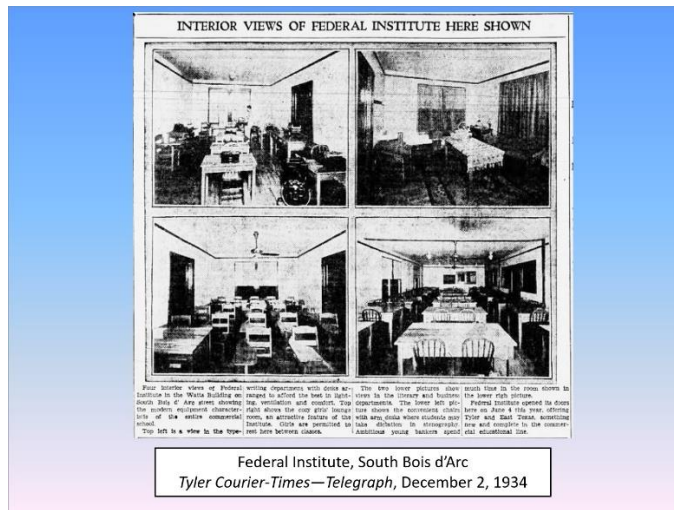
Hogg and Roberts Junior Highs were both brand new. Gary, Bonner, Douglas, and Marsh were the White elementaries, and Peete, and East End Elementaries for Black students. Fall

enrollment in 1930 district wide was 4000, and by 1931 it was 4800, a 20% increase in only one year. Tyler Junior College had been created in 1926 and shared the high school campus.

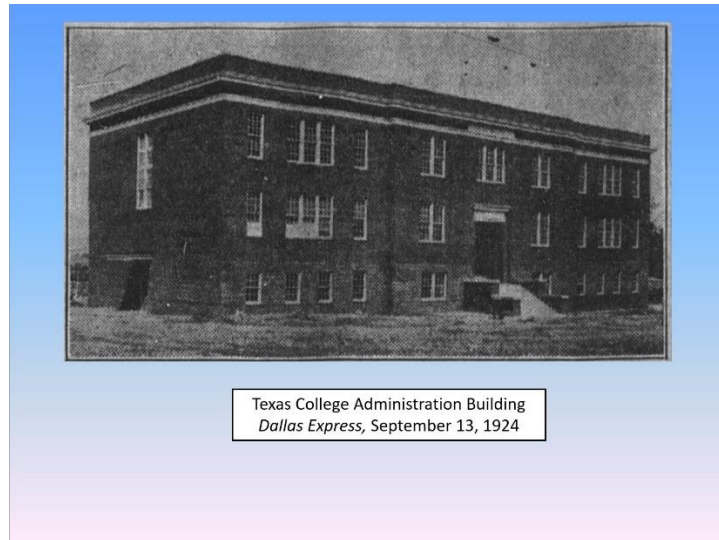


Tyler Commercial College  
115 S. College

Just up College Street next door to the public library, was Tyler Commercial College which trained both male and female students in a wide variety of business applications.



Federal Institute, founded here in 1934, also trained students in business skills.



In North Tyler, Texas College, affiliated with the CME Church, became an accredited four year college—this is their administration building, completed in 1924, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.



Butler College in west Tyler, remained a private junior college affiliated with the Black Baptist Church.

Most Tyler places of worship were located within a few blocks of downtown in 1930, and several still are. However, some expanded during the 30s, and some moved further out.





Marvin Methodist Episcopal Church,  
South

Marvin Church sanctuary hasn't changed that much.



First Baptist Church  
301 W. Ferguson  
Lillie Belle Wright Education Building, on left, constructed 1935

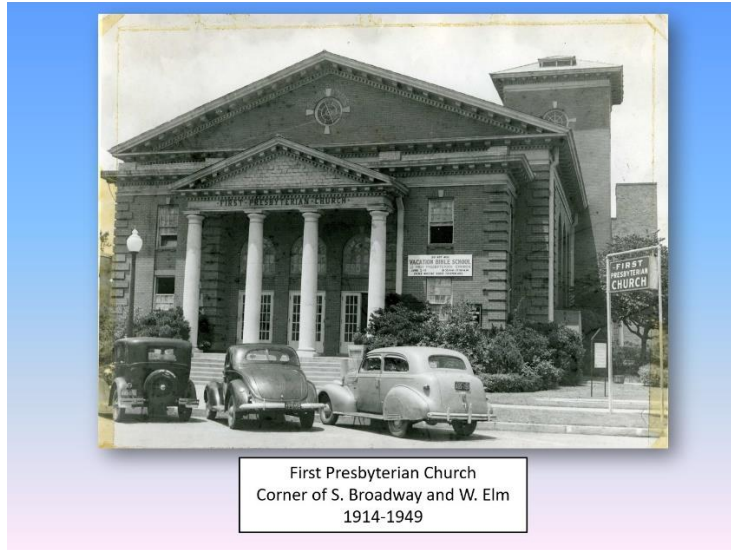
First Baptist Church added the Lillie Belle Wright Education Building in 1935.



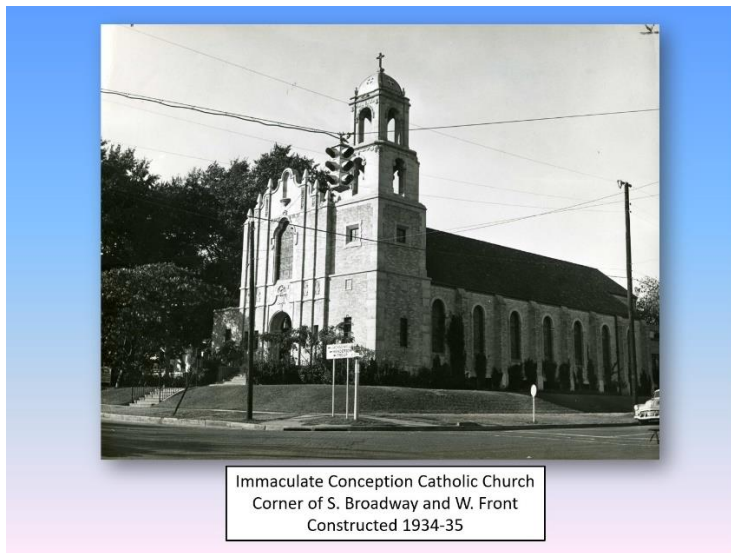
Tyler Church of Christ  
West Erwin  
Constructed 1927



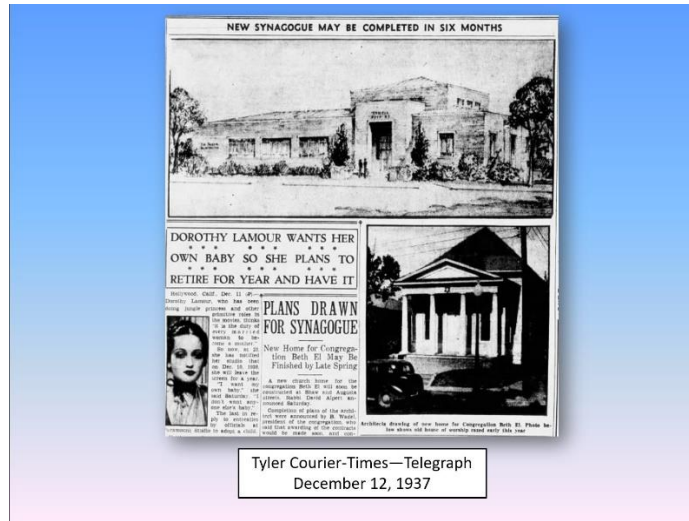
Tyler Church of Christ, now called West Erwin Church of Christ, had a very imposing building that had been constructed in 1927.



First Presbyterian was on the corner of South Broadway and West Elm where the parking tower now is. It was considering moving but that wouldn't happen until after World War II.

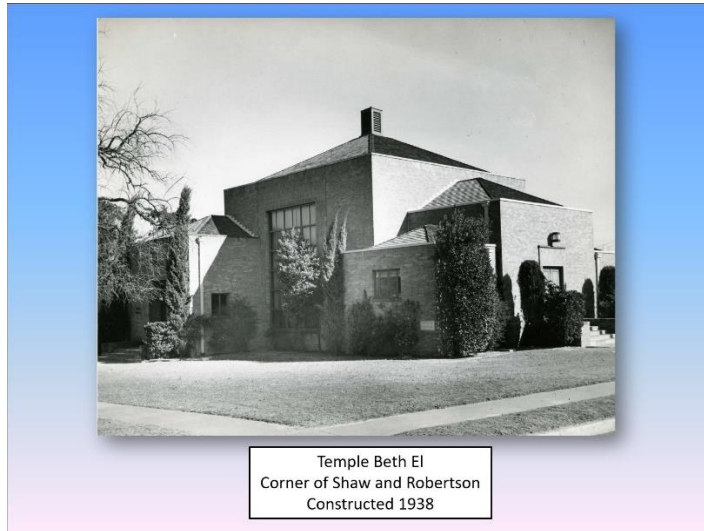


Immaculate Conception Catholic Church did move a little further south—their Spanish revival sanctuary was built in 1934-35.



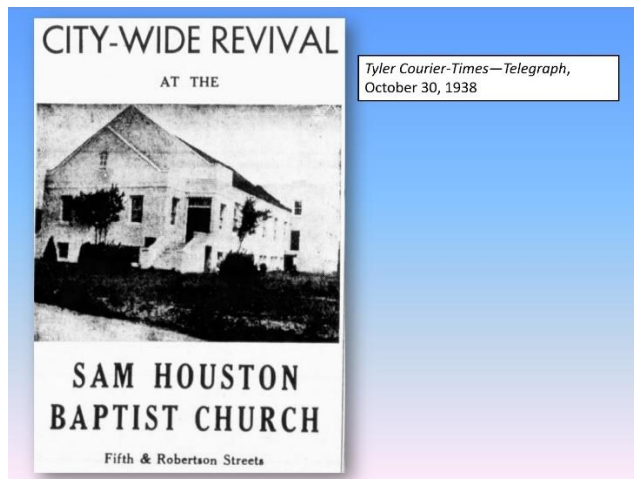
Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph  
December 12, 1937

Congregation Beth El moved the furthest. In 1930 they were on the corner of College and University across from the high school,



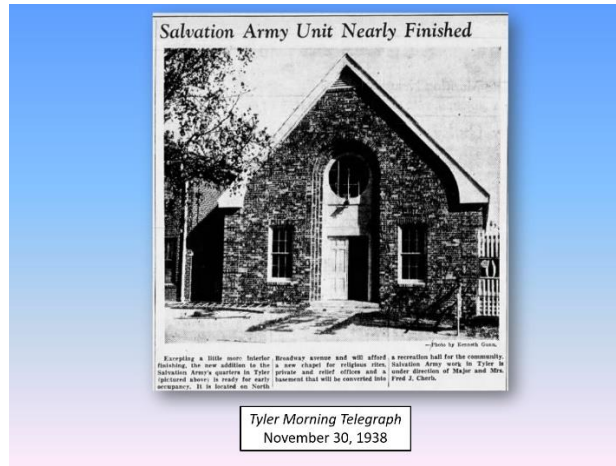
Temple Beth El  
Corner of Shaw and Robertson  
Constructed 1938

but in 1938 they built a new temple on the corner of Shaw and Robertson.

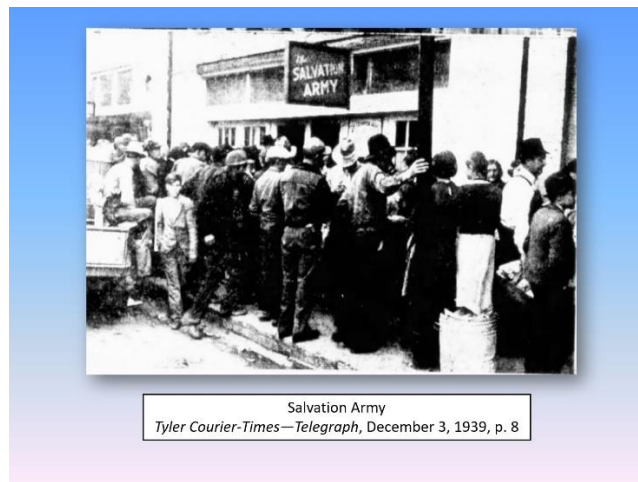


Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph,  
October 30, 1938

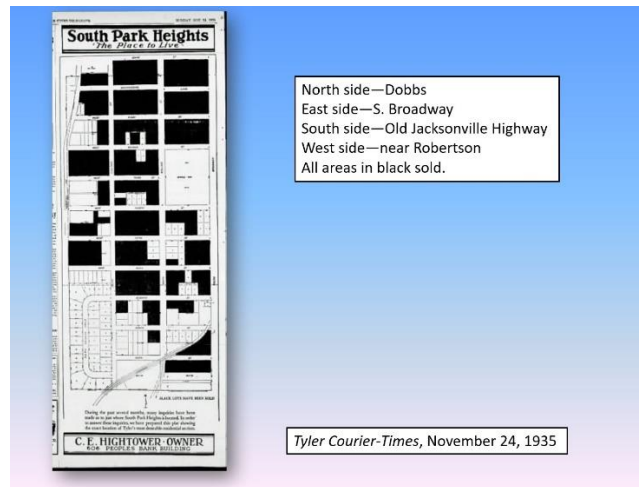
Sam Houston Baptist opened at Fifth and Robertson. East and northeast Tyler also had a number of churches established by 1930.



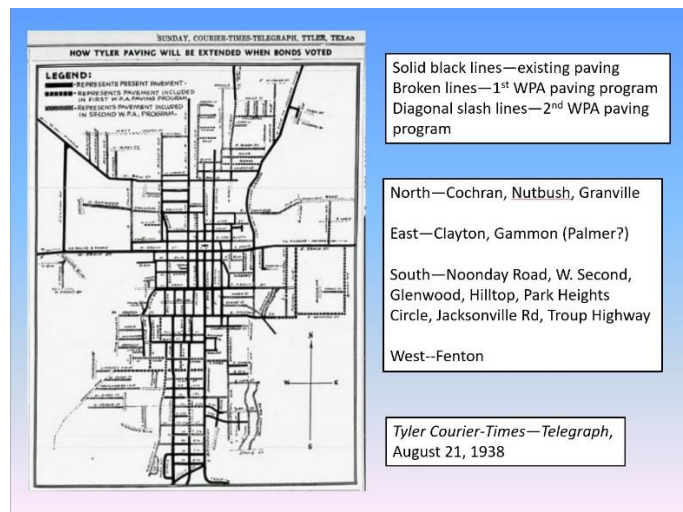
Even the Salvation Army built a new chapel with offices and recreation hall on North Broadway.



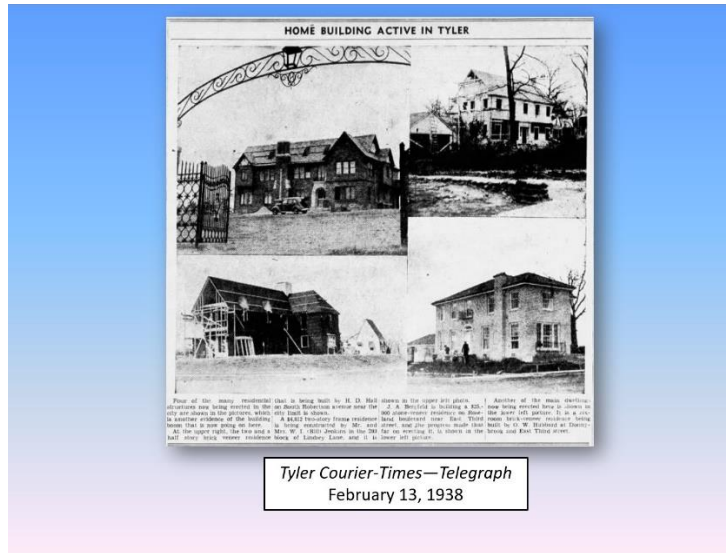
Both they and the Star of Hope Mission were hard pressed to provide for the number of homeless transients and others who needed help during the Great Depression. Churches and other organizations, like the Lions Club, Kiwanis, and Rotary Club pitched in, particularly before some of the New Deal programs offered jobs. Families were living in boxcars or in culverts, and small children were seen begging on the square. Things were particularly difficult when the oil field shut down at times due to clamping down on hot oil production.



Residential development predominantly shifted south. South Park Heights, what we would call the Azalea District, first opened up in 1906, but initial lot sales were slow because streets and utilities needed to be brought in. By 1935 over half of the lots between Shaw and Park Heights Circle, Broadway and roughly Robertson, had been sold.



Not all of the streets had been paved. In 1938 Tyler put up a bond election to pave many more of the streets with the help of two different WPA funding programs. This map definitely shows the expanding areas of paved streets through the Azalea District, making Tyler a north/south town.



These are houses on South Robertson, Lindsey Lane, Roseland Blvd., and East Third. Other additions besides South Park Heights that made the newspaper in the 30s were Donnybrook Heights, Country Club Addition, Jarrel Addition, Summit Heights, Connally Heights, Douglas Park Addition, Horn Addition, and Highland Park. Shirley Simons was the most mentioned architect, but Miss Winnie Foshee told the newspaper in 1933 that she had drawn more house plans in the previous six years than she could remember.



All was not work and struggle during the Great Depression in Tyler. Willow Brook Country Club formally opened in 1922 on the west side of town.





Willow Brook Country Club  
Swimming Pool constructed 1934

They built a real concrete swimming pool in 1934, six years before the public pool at Fun Forest was finished in 1940.



Corner Glenwood and West Houston  
*Tyler Courier-Times—Telegraph*, April 16, 1939

The Tyler Little Theatre presented their first play in 1927 in the high school auditorium. In 1939 they built their own theatre building on the corner of Glenwood and West Houston.



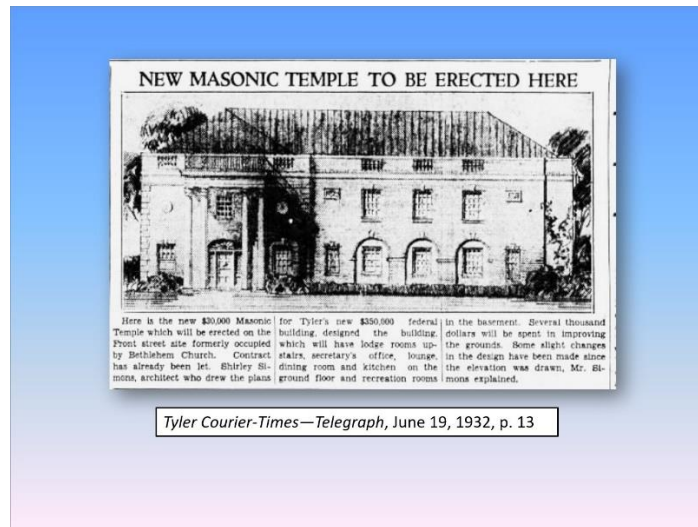
Tyler Symphony Orchestra  
Organized 1936

The Tyler Symphony Orchestra organized in 1936.

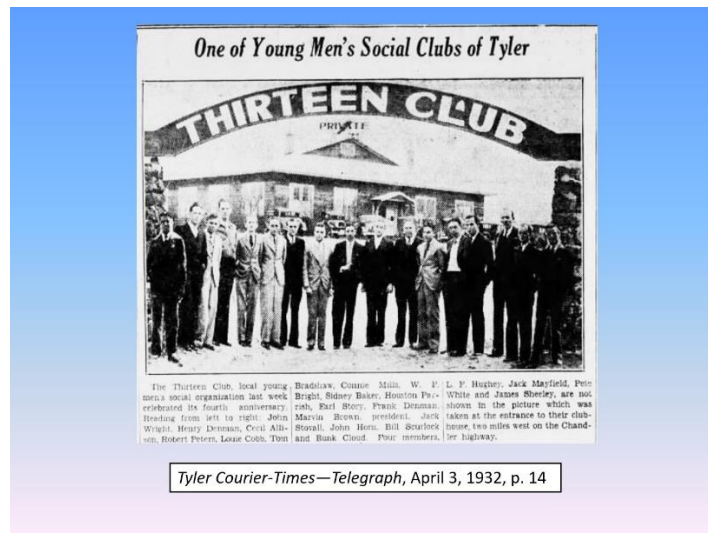


Tyler Municipal Band  
Director, Doc Witt

Doc Witt's Tyler Municipal Band continued to offer free band concerts at the various city parks and at the bandstand on the square.



St. John's Masonic Lodge build a new temple in 1932, designed by Shirley Simons.



The Thirteen Club, organized in 1928 had their club headquarters two miles out the Chandler Highway, on what I have been told was previously KKK property.

Women's clubs had been important to Tyler since the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle organized in 1888 with Anna Pennybacker, president. By 1931 nine literary clubs had federated as the Woman's Forum. That year Judge Sam Lindsey offered the Forum a free lot on South Broadway if they could raise the money for a building.



Tyler Woman's Building  
 Corner S. Broadway and W. Dobbs  
 Constructed 1932

They met the challenge and in 1932, the Woman's Building on the corner of Broadway and Shaw was built. Over the years it has been the site for many meetings, recitals, plays, and celebrations.



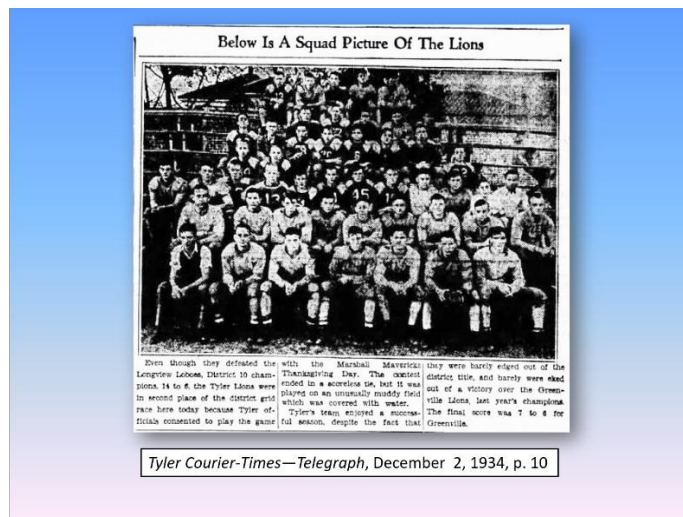
Dedication of the Vial-Fragosa Trail Centennial Marker  
 1936

And of course the 1930s brought the Texas Centennial. Here is a group of historical minded citizens at the dedication of the Vial-Fragosa trail marker in northern Smith County.

Other Tyler residents preferred sports.



We had a semi-pro baseball team which for most of its years was called the Tyler Trojans, but in the early 30s was called the Tyler Governors due to Tyler having been the home for Govs. Roberts, Hubbard, and Hogg. They played on a field northeast of downtown near the Cotton Belt shops.



Both Tyler High School and Tyler Junior College had baseball, football, and basketball teams, and the Tyler High football team won state in 1930. Some of the businesses and parks also had amateur baseball teams.





The bowling alley was on North Broadway. Tyler State Park was developed for the most part during the 1930s as a federal/state/county and city project north of town.



One of the most interesting weekly attractions was the professional wrestling matches held at various places around town. Sarah McClendon even wrote a light-hearted newspaper article on what ladies wore when they attended the matches.



Gates to East Texas Fair  
W. Front Street

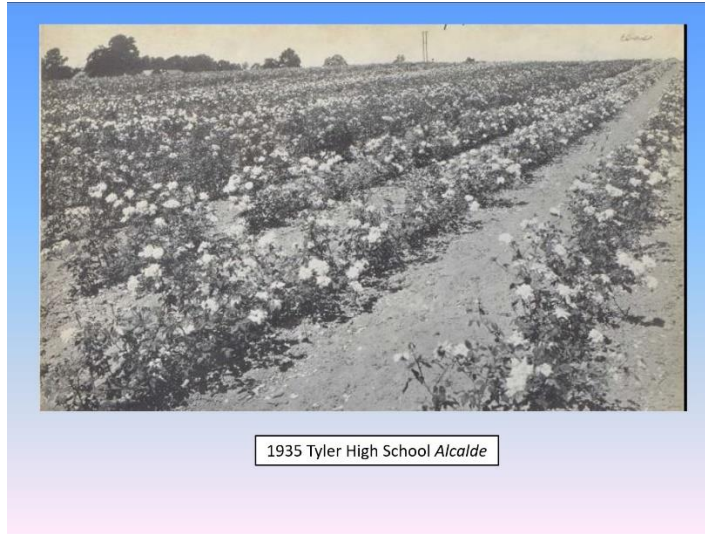
And there was the East Texas Fair in the fall, with exhibits and rides.



Tyler Memorial Park Cemetery  
*Tyler Morning Telegraph*, March 15, 1933

Tyler even planned ahead with a new cemetery west of town—Tyler Memorial. It didn't quite develop as this illustration suggested, but it is still active and has expanded over the years.

What did I leave out? Well, roses, of course.



Roses had always been part of the local nursery trade. However, it wasn't until the 1920s that commercial rose growing really began to hit the newspapers.



By 1929, 80 rail cars of roses were leaving Tyler over the winter, and tours of rose fields had begun. The Tyler Garden Club, which recently celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, saw the possibilities of branding Tyler with the rose and developing a festival to celebrate it and bring in visitors.



Tyler Municipal Rose Garden, 1933-1935  
Across Troup Highway from Rose Hill Cemetery

The first Tyler Municipal Rose Garden, 1933-1935, was across from Rose Hill Cemetery on land loaned by the Bergfeld family.



Construction of Bergfeld Park Amphitheatre, 1936

Early Rose Festival coronations were held at Bergfeld Park, which needed an amphitheater, shown here under construction.



1934 Rose Queen  
Louise Boren

Here is Queen Louise Boren, the 1934 Rose Queen, the first Tyler girl chosen. The 1933 Queen had been from Palestine, and the powers that be made sure that didn't happen again.



Rose Festival  
1935 Tyler High School *Alcalde*

Even then floats were elaborate.



Rose Festival  
1935 Tyler High School *Alcalde*





Rose Festival  
1935 Tyler High School *Alcalde*

And there had to be marching bands.



And here 's a float from the 1939 Rose Festival parade, that shows the linking of two of the favored industries in Tyler—Roses and petroleum.

The Historical Society is always in search of historical photographs of Tyler and Smith County. If you run across any while cleaning out an attic, or rummaging through a garage sale, please let us know. As time allows, and with an appointment, we can probably also scan photographs so that you can keep your originals. There's nothing quite like photos to capture the bygone life of a community.