

Original town lots now owned by Kegans, occupied by Leonard Pharmacy

Written by By Ava Barlow, Staff Writer

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MAY 5, 2011 - On July 22, 1880, the first day lots and blocks were sold in the town of Leonard; Dr. William Atcheson Kuykendall bought the lots numbered 18, 9 and 10 of block 13, which is the north side of the Leonard square. The main focus of this article will be blocks 17 and 18, which is presently occupied by The Leonard Pharmacy.

Documents were found to confirm lot 18 was coupled with lot 17 when filed in the courthouse on June 22, 1897, after Kuykendall bought the lot from J. A. and L. E. Gober on June 2, 1892. J. A. Gober was not the original owner of Lot 17 as there are documents showing D. R. P. McDermett sold the lot to J. A. Gober on 12/10/1886. Kuykendall died on April 26, 1902, leaving a portion of his large estate to his wife Martha and the rest to their three children, son John Oscar (J.O), and daughters Antonio E. Hoard and Lou M. Greer. Martha received Lot 18 as part of her inheritance from her husband.



In Martha's will, she reserves the income from the leasing of the corner brick building for her sister Sarah E. Hanna, until her death. Martha's son, J. O., handled the business of renting the building and seeing the income went to his aunt.

In August of 1909, J. O. sold his one-third interest in Lot 18 to his sister Lou Greer. Lou died Jan. 17, 1923, leaving Lot 17 to her niece, Louesa Newman, and returned Lot 18 to her brother, J. O.

In 1924, J. O. borrowed \$10,000 from The Greenville National Exchange Bank, assumingly to make improvements on several downtown buildings owned by him, one of them being Lot 18.

John Oscar Kuykendall married Mary and they had nine children, seven of which lived to be

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adults. Dr. L. C. and O. A. were his sons and Pauline Palmer, Louesa Newman, Antonio Cobb, and Mary Inez Temple, daughters, were listed in his last will and testament. Probably one adult child preceded him in death.

Louesa inherited Lot 18 from her father at his death on Dec. 4, 1930, giving her ownership of both Lot 17 and 18. In another document dated June 18, 1923, Louesa hired J. C. Field and Co. to "pave that portion of said premises lying in front of and outside the curb line of the sidewalk reservation. Said paving shall consist of brick paving and concrete curb";.

On May 14, 1958 the building on Lot 17 and 18 were sold to Joe N. and Inez M. Gaulden, who relocated the pharmacy Gaulden operated a few doors to the east to the corner store, Lot 18. Gaulden Drugs operated out of the corner building from September 1958 to Aug. 26, 1969.

In September of 1969, Ben D. Steen of Dallas brought Eugene Kegans to Leonard as a pharmacist/partner/manager of the store.

On Feb. 10, 1973, Eugene and Becky Kegans became full owners of both lots and The Leonard Pharmacy with it occupying lot 18. In July of 1977 the Kegans' remodeled the store, doubling the square footage from 2500 to 5000, taking in lot 17. They have also undergone two interior remodelings since 1977, with the last one being completed within the last year.

No record has been found as to when the brick buildings were constructed on Lot 18 or Lot 17. However, there are pictures to prove that in the early 1900's there was indeed a hardware store by the name of J. B. Woosley & Sons Hardware that was located on these two lots. A few years later, yet another picture shows a steam tractor sitting in front of Y. T. Manning & Sons Hardware store, also in the same location.

By the early 1920's a variety store occupied the corner building and Texas Power and Light was in the Lot 17 building until 1945. The variety store was known as The Model Variety Store and also The Ben Franklin Variety Store. One historian said "it was just called The Leonard Variety Store";.

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As varied as the opinions are on the names of the variety store, the opinions on whom the owners were are just as varied. The name E. L. Slankard was mentioned with J. J. and Lorene Anderson managing the store for him. Also Mae Sharrett and Annette Kaiser were mentioned as employees along with Iva Watson.

O. W. Sharrett was also named as an owner, with his wife, known by everyone as Leon, as manager of the store. Her full name was Jessie Leon.

Next door from the variety store, Lena Ewing owned a dress shop in half of Lot 17 for many years, renting the space as the buildings stayed in the Kuykendall family and their descendants until Gauldens bought it in 1958. Dr. Van Schoick had a clinic in the right half of the building.

Another business remembered to have occupied this building was a tailor shop, and also a beauty shop operated by Addie Lorange and Modene Dockery. There is a picture of a barbershop - which is believed to have occupied one of these buildings at one time - with O. W. Sharrett as one of the barbers.

Both buildings are believed to have been closed up for about four years, from 1952 to 1958, when Gaulden made the purchase for the drugstore. The drugstore was in the corner building and the other lot building was used to rent.