

THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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Per Year Elsewhere in Texas..... \$35.00
Per Year Outside of Texas..... \$37.00

Oldest business celebrates 125 years

The Observer/Enterprise is the oldest business institution in Coke County, celebrating 125 years of continuous service to Coke County on June 13, 2014.

The Robert Lee Observer, one of the forerunners of the present publication, had its beginning in Hayrick, the first county seat, exactly three months from the date that Coke County was created by the Texas Legislature in June of 1889.

The paper changed hands with almost every issue for a while. Perhaps they couldn't get the business deal settled or couldn't make up their minds as to who was to serve as editor or publisher.

At any rate, the first issue, which was called The Coke County Democrat, was a four-column, four page paper, "published by Warren and Edgar, at Hayrick, Texas."

The second issue of the Coke County Democrat named Warren and Matthews as editor and publisher, while a short time later Brady and Shores were proclaimed as editor and publisher.

J.S. Brady bought Shores' interest in the paper and became both editor and publisher.

Mr. Brady moved the plant to Robert Lee early in 1891, when the county seat moved there.

Then the new paper in the

new town in the new county was given the name of Coke County Rustler.

The name of the paper was changed to the Robert Lee Observer in 1904, when the editor J.T. Rankin put on a subscription drive. A person could submit a name with each one dollar subscription. The person submitting the winning name was to receive a prize of five dollars cash and five year subscription to the paper.

"The Robert Lee Observer has never missed an issue" however, there are gaps in the files, some of which were destroyed in a fire some years ago.

Throughout its many years the Robert Lee Observer has carried the story of the changing times, of success, of failure, of sorrows, and of joys –the stories of the weal and the woe, printing from week to week word pictures of Coke County as it changed, always seeking to be entertaining, informative, and of service to all who have read its pages and to all of Coke County.

That service was not always easy. During its first eighteen years, the paper was produced on a "George Washington" hand press, under tribulations that lack of adequate machinery brought. In those days, the type was set by hand, and in some cases the printer's whole family was

1889-1904

COKE COUNTY RUSTLER

1904-1984

Robert Lee Observer

1907-1984

BRONTE ENTERPRISE

1984-2014

THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

Serving Coke County

pressed into service to get out the paper.

The Robert Lee Observer, including its predecessors had a long list of colorful editors, some of whom spoke their own minds in no uncertain terms.

George Beeman, editor and publisher of The Rustler in 1902, often broke forth in rhyme.

A while ago 'was awfully dry,

"We cannot plow, was all the cry. But now the ground is pretty wet, we're going to raise a crop, you bet. His business grew to be a bustler, through advertising in The Rustler."

George Cowan, who owned and edited the paper for eighteen years, was known over West Texas for his dry wit. Readers watched for the entertaining, good-natured three-way banter

carried on between George Cowan and "Uncle" Bill Kelli's of the Sterling City News-Record, and D.M. West of the Bronte Enterprise.

A.W. Puett, who became the publisher in 1925, was one of the most independent in spirit. He called a spade a spade and spared nobody. Once when a group petitioned the Robert Lee City

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Happy Birthday Coke County!

The Caston CO. LLC was first started when J.D. Harmon came home from WW II. In 1946, J.D. and his brother-in-law Clem Caston camped out and worked for a rancher around the Post area in exchange for his first dozer. In 1958 when Carlton came home from Korea, he went to work for J.D. In 1961, Carlton and Leta were married and in 1965, they purchased their first dozer. In 1967, the business became J.D. Harmon Inc. with J.D., Mary Jo, Carlton and Leta as owners. In 1987, J.D. and Mary decided to retire and Carlton and Leta purchased the company which became known as The Caston Co. In June 1999, Carlton passed away and it became The Caston Co. LLC with Leta and Marty at the helm. It was nothing new to Marty as he had grown up operating and repairing equipment since he was 12 years old.

In 1987, Carlton purchased a Caterpillar 215 excavator and designed a grubber to go on the excavator to grub brush. In 2000, shortly after Carlton's death, the Concho Valley Water Shed project was created. The Caston Co. LLC was asked to take an excavator to the field day in Sterling City and show what the excavator could do in grubbing the mesquite and cedar with the attachment Carlton had designed. Following this demonstration, excavators popped up all over the country with people taking advantage of the attachment Carlton designed and implemented into our business. We have dedicated all of our 68 years in business to specializing in soil and water conservation for farmers and ranchers!

We do want to THANK all of our customers for your long continued business and friendship through the years. We do appreciate all of you! Without you, we could not have existed all of these years! Thank You!

The Caston Family

THE CASTON CO. LLC

Family Owned for 68 Years!

Office (325) 453-2453

Marty (325) 277-1375

Happy Birthday Coke County!

In 1954, Clytus and Mozelle Smith started **Joni Lyn, a wholesale blouse factory in Bronte.** In 1971, the Taylor family purchased this business and the name was changed to **HSL Taylor Company.**

In 1982, the company was purchased by **Shirley and Ronnie Denton and Cherry and Linda Dry.**

Although it's no longer a blouse factory,



CL Dry and Shirley Denton 1982

Shirley's Place is a treasure trove of antiques, unique gifts and more!

Shirley's Place

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