



**Coke County Courthouse!** In the spring of 1891, the cornerstone was laid for the new Courthouse that was to be the home of Coke County's government for the next 65 years. Built of native stone quarried by hand, most of the stone came from the Kirkland Ranch and hauled to Robert Lee in wagons.

for she, too, was expecting a visit from the stork soon, and she would not permit the other women to leave her. Yes, they were forgiven for three weeks later my mother carried her new baby and watched through the long hours of night at the bedside of the same dying young mother, who was not strong enough to endure those pioneer hardships. Mother helped prepare the bodies for burial.

When the German had returned with no help, my mother said to him, "Mr. Nolan, the storm that nearly blew away my home also blew in a little baby girl." He said in broken English, "My Gott, Mine Gott, I am an old man; my children are all grown; if there is anything I can do for you, command me."

Mother replied, "Please nail the roof over my head and help the children to gather the scattered contents of the kitchen."

An old bachelor, Major G.W. Perryman, from Washington, D.C., had just arrived in the new county. (Later he became the first county judge of Coke County). Hearing of the dilemma, he walked five miles to offer his assistance. Arriving, he walked the dirt floor, exclaiming, "Well! Well! Well!", apparently as helpless as the new born babe. Finally he said, "I know what I can do, I'll go the the next neighbor and bring her if I have to carry her and her children on my back." This neighbor lived 10 miles away. Away went the major, and late in the afternoon a young mother came horseback while the Major stayed with her children.

Mr. Pearce returned about sundown on March 2, and no doubt was greatly relieved to find that the baby had arrived and all was well, for he had been unable to secure the services of a midwife, and was planning to take his family in the wagon to Coleman where there was a doctor.

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Mr. Hayley moved to Coke County in 1889. He served as postmaster 24 years and at Norton 15 years. He operated a drug store in Bronte where Margaret's Flowers and Gifts is now located. He died in June 1949.

Mr. and Mrs. Hayley were married at the Pearce Hotel in Ballinger June 28, 1899. The hotel was owned by her father, H.L. Pearce, who helped organized Runnels County. They lived in Robert Lee three

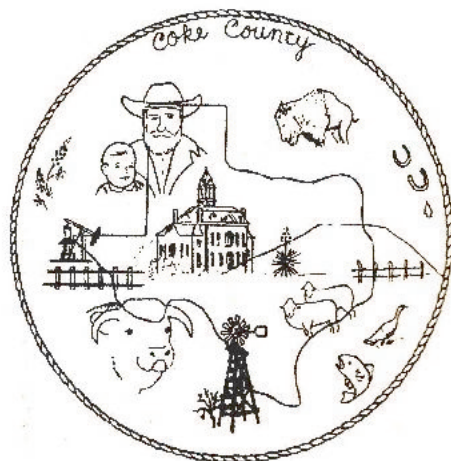
months after they married, then moved to Bronte and lived here 27 years.

Mrs. Hayley spent a year setting type by hand for the Coke County Rustler, now Robert Lee Observer, which was edited by her brother, the late Hubert Pearce. She died in October 1955.



**A Step Up From the Pony Express!** N.W. Kiker is shown driving the mail hack to Robert Lee in the early 1920s.

# BRONTE'S PIONEER INSURANCE AGENCY



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