

History of the Silos

Written by Stone Works Silos

Sunday, 10 August 2008 17:16 - Last Updated Monday, 20 July 2009 09:38

HISTORY OF THE SILOS *as told by Bill Blanton*

The silos were built by my father, Lester Franklin Blanton in 1950.

We moved to Carrollton with the clothes on our back: Mom, Dad, Grandfather (Eldon Brake) and us 4 children. My grandfather's farm was where R L Turner high school now stands. I was 7 years old when we moved from Kansas in 1931. Carrollton was in early growth stage--population 600. I was the youngest son, Walter (the oldest), Jack (the middle boy--about 7 years older than me). Betty (the only



girl and next to the oldest).

The school was small and it grew until it eventually became the school we have now named after Jenny Stark, who lived on Beltline Road and Maryland. She was one of the most popular teachers. Betty would attend TSWC in Denton. Jack went on to SMU. Walter and I didn't attend college. We certainly had the money to attend but it just didn't appeal to us.

My family would become a major part of the community of Carrollton and contribute greatly in its growth. And the silos would be a major part of surrounding industry, serving many counties with grain product.

My father was on the school board, so were Walter and Jack. My two brothers would serve 27 years combined between them. We would serve in the city mayor's office and as trustees on the board--even become a Texas state representative for a decade.

We first started Carrollton Feed Store--our first grain product being Blanco Feed, which had its own label. Later on our name changed to Blanton Grain Company.

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We had a dairy farm just 2 miles north of Beltline and 35. The farm made it possible for the silos to be built and the granary to flourish.

In the early 30's right where the grain elevator is, there was a sheet iron building, and next to that we had a hammer mill--the only machine used to grind the grain at that time, driven by the power of a tractor. The hammer mill was a huge set of blades that the grain was poured through.

Oats was a big product. We had a machine that would crimp the corn. We mixed the corn, the cob and all with oats. One didn't have to shuck the corn. It was 41% protein, with added cotton seed, to make it healthier for the cows. Cows need fiber to produce good milk. The mixture was a yellow color.

People working in the granary were called corn shovelers. We served all farmers in the area. We bought grain, the whole ears of corn, and wheat, from farms in Plano and in communities just south of Dallas. Wheat was the main produce, corn, the close second.

When the silos were poured, they were poured in one try. The walls of the silo rose as the concrete was poured. A company called Johnson and Samson built the grain elevators. We eventually built a grain elevator in Lancaster as well.

This was a true family business in every sense of the word. Betty was raising 5 girls. She needed work and would work for us 30 years in the scale house office where the grain was weighed. Betty married a WWII veteran who had one arm shot off in the war.

The scale house was very interesting, with a clear plate glass window so that vehicles pulling onto the scales could be seen along with their driver. There was a scale book entry--a ticket going into the books logging the load, its weight, the date, the vendor. By this method we purchased our grain.

When the feed business was sold, ownership transferred to Lee Groves in 1994. There was a billboard on the property at that time that former televangelist, Robert Tilton rented from Mr.

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Groves. Needless to say, the Tilton sign was painted over in 1995.

The climbing gym was started in 1994.



Richard owns the old scale house office. It has a concrete foundation with a storage tank under the scale. There is also a crawl space under the scale office on the 4th street side near the alley. There was a fire in the scale house a long time ago. One resident, Booker T. Jackson still bears the scars on a webbed hand that was seared by the intense flames.

The secret entrance to the silos now stays flooded. There is an opening in the hallway to the passage. This entrance houses the old gears and mechanisms.