



A LITTLE JOURNEY  
*through*  
THE LOWER VALLEY  
OF THE RIO GRANDE

THE MAGIC VALLEY  
OF TEXAS



*A Story*

WRITTEN FOR THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES

*By Julia Cameron Montgomery*

J. C. ENGELMAN, INC.  
Rio Grande Valley Texas Lands  
Sales Office; 1228 Arcade Bldg.  
ST. LOUIS, MO.





WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW  
ABOUT THE RICHEST FRONTIER IN THE  
WORLD TODAY

*THE LOWER VALLEY OF THE RIO GRANDE*

**V**ISION is the first requisite of accomplishment, the vital essence of all true success. Attribute of every pioneer soul, it sets him high above his fellows, star-bound.

Such favored one has fought and conquered mountain and swamp and stream and ocean and air in the spirit of bringing all men and things within a common touch. His greatest service yet fulfilled lies in TRANSPORTATION—thousands and thousands of miles of railroads and steamship lines and air routes efficiently operated all over the world.

In the United States, heroic minds conceived the plan and determination to bring East and West together back in the sixties. Men of indomitable will, courage, and skill persisted in the high vision, struggling under almost insuperable difficulties, sometimes halting for devastating flood, ravages of epidemic in labor camp, or lack of capital, or failure of promised cooperation, changing management or ownership as necessity demanded.

Such was the early history of the construction of the several divisions of rail-

roads now incorporated in the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES, more thrilling and varied than the story of *The Covered Wagon*, winding from the rising sun to the portals of the Golden Gate.

The first railroad built in Texas, construction beginning in 1851, is a part of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES. The first railroad to reach Texas from Louisiana, known as "Bayley's Dream," is a part of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES. The first railroad in Texas to cross the Great Divide to meet its mate at mid-continent on January 12, 1883, is the main artery of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES, the *Sunset Route*.

Had the San Antonio & Aransas Pass railroad—a part of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES—continued to its original destination at the time planned, namely, to the Rio Grande and to Brownsville, it would have been the first railroad into the Valley. For reasons well known to the railroad world, construction stopped at Falfurrias, although thirteen miles of original grading from Falfurrias south has stood from 1904 to the present day.

← Walk down Palm Lane—near Rio Hondo and the SOUTHERN PACIFIC's new line to Brownsville. Imagination kindles at the suggestion of tropical mystery, *magic*, luring beyond the turn in the road. Palm fronds hide from camera's view a large red barn on the left and a weather-worn house of pioneer days on the right, mellow reminders of early settlers who dreamed dreams just now turning true.





The original survey and construction of a railroad to the Lower Rio Grande country, now known as the *Magic Valley* of Texas, was accounted a wild and visionary undertaking, almost as much so as that of "Bayley's Dream."

There seemed some excuse for the effort to connect historic Brownsville with the rest of the world by rail; but that branch which was projected from Harlingen west to a spot in the wilderness thereafter named Sam Fordyce, was considered an example of folly and a willful waste of company funds.

Today, that same stretch of rails is said to bear the richest return on the investment of any piece of road of equal length in the entire country. A chain of happy, prosperous towns all along its route, fed by the richest of farm and horticultural territory, built up its revenue to the point of making it highly attractive to one of the major railroad systems, and in 1924, the Missouri Pacific bought the Gulf Coast Lines. Since acquiring the Valley road, the Missouri Pacific has pursued a program of extensions and improvements, bringing it up to the standard of facilities and service employed throughout the system.

And now, the coming of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC, which has more operated mileage than any other railroad in the United States, and which with its steamship lines reaches from New York on the Atlantic to Portland on the Pacific, gives the Valley transportation service reaching every market on the continent, and connecting with every principal world port by ships at sea.

The combined excellence of transportation facilities and service now provides assurance that the Valley will inevitably en-

joy unlimited and uninterrupted progress and prosperity.

The policy of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES has always been one of aggressive development. Its custom is to build up markets along its lines, employing every agency to develop new territory. This is conclusively shown in the unparalleled service afforded Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, and over eleven hundred miles of the west coast of Mexico, and every section touched by its lines.



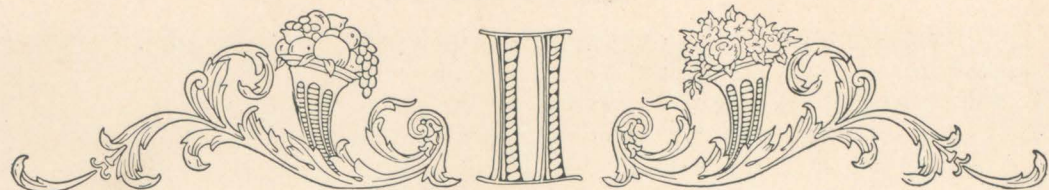
A Harlingen sky-scraper, the Baxter building.

Pursuing the present trend of railroad expansion favored by the Government, the SOUTHERN PACIFIC has, by its determined effort to enter the Lower Valley of the Rio Grande, broadcast to the nation and to the world the unique importance of this territory, the development of which has now

reached a point justifying greatly increased transportation facilities.

The psychological effect resulting from the contest before the Interstate Commerce Commission and the granting of permit to enter created more far-reaching and favorable publicity than any the Valley has hitherto received.

Accepting the premise that development follows transportation facilities, it is reasonable to conclude that the entry of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC at this stage of the Valley's progress will greatly stimulate investment of large capital, more intensive cultivation of lands already under the plow, promote the building of new communities and clearing of hundreds of new farms, rapidly increase population, and guarantee the excellence of transportation service in a country fast demanding the utmost of every developing agency.



## CHOOSING A PLACE TO LIVE

WHAT are the factors governing the choice of a desirable place in which to live?

It would seem that the maximum of physical comfort—climate and healthful surroundings—with unlimited business opportunities, supplemented by educational, religious, social, and recreational background, with assurance of safe and sane conditions in all lines of personal and business relations would constitute the ideal.

*The Lower Valley of the Rio Grande offers these advantages, and more, as inducement to home-makers.*

A man naturally considers investment and financial possibilities above other things. A woman reckons upon the basis of proper environment for the rearing of her children, the servant problem, and the chances for a measure of congenial church, civic, and social affiliation, either rural or community.

Almost invariably men who come to the Valley are seized with *The Spirit of the Valley*, that contagious, infectious, breathing, palpitating *Something*, which in itself embodies *Magic*, a word fitly applied to the strip of silt-laden soils stretching, rainbow-like, from the Gulf of Mexico at Point Isabel to a setting in the hills of Starr County, a distance of a possible hundred and twenty-five miles.

Since the world began, women have followed their men into desert, jungle, and onto trackless seas. So, in pioneer days, they trailed to the *Magic Valley*.

Conditions in those days were very dif-

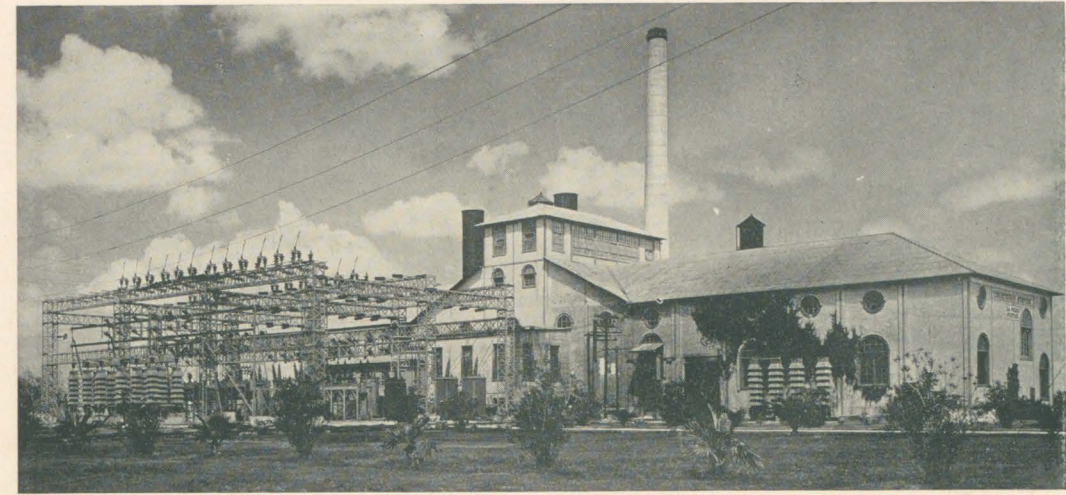
ferent from the present time. Everything was "different from the things back home." The women endured loneliness, disappointment, hardship, and became homesick.

Even Paradise would not satisfy a homesick woman. Numbers of these early settlers, brought on and over-sold by aggressive colonization agents, pulled up stakes and trekked homeward. But, strange to relate, having become inoculated with the *Magic* of the Valley, hundreds of them—even the erstwhile disconsolate women—gradually drifted back, content to settle in a land that by comparison with most sections of the country seems like the land of Canaan. Many of them are now the Valley's most satisfied, prosperous citizens, and its best boosters.

The pioneer order of selling more acreage than could be handled safely and successfully has given place to careful selection of tracts well within the means and ability of all purchasers to handle. Present conditions make it possible to fulfill all promises and expectations.

Living conditions have improved immeasurably since those days. Women now have everything that tends to satisfy their needs and desires—the finest schools, beautiful churches, civic and social clubs of every kind, plenty of "help" available, accessibility to every Valley town via the Highway, good picture houses showing many of the great films often before they reach up-state cities, with enough music, art, and literary atmosphere to leaven the whole.





*Las Palmas station, San Benito, headquarters of the Valley's electric power supply, consisting at present of twenty-two thousand horse power, distributed over one of the longest transmission lines in the country, more than two hundred and fifty miles, serving more than twenty towns and hundreds of rural homes.*

One of the chief inspirations of Valley women is the Lower Rio Grande Valley Federation of Women's Clubs, organized January, 1914, by the late Col. Alba Heywood, one of the early discoverers of the rich potentialities of the Valley. From the beginning, the Federation slogan was, *Beautify the Valley*. This is still the major theme of activities. The Federation grew rapidly from eight charter-member clubs to its present membership of more than fifty-eight, including the majority of Valley clubs with approximately two thousand women enrolled. The Federated Music Clubs affiliate with this body, furnishing excellent features on the semi-annual programs of the Federation.

To attend a spring or fall Federation meeting—one day only—is to gain new inspiration, a clarified vision of the ultimate glorious fulfillment of every promise the Valley offers. Its women! Wherever else can such a splendid body be found, bound together by a common tie of service? It is

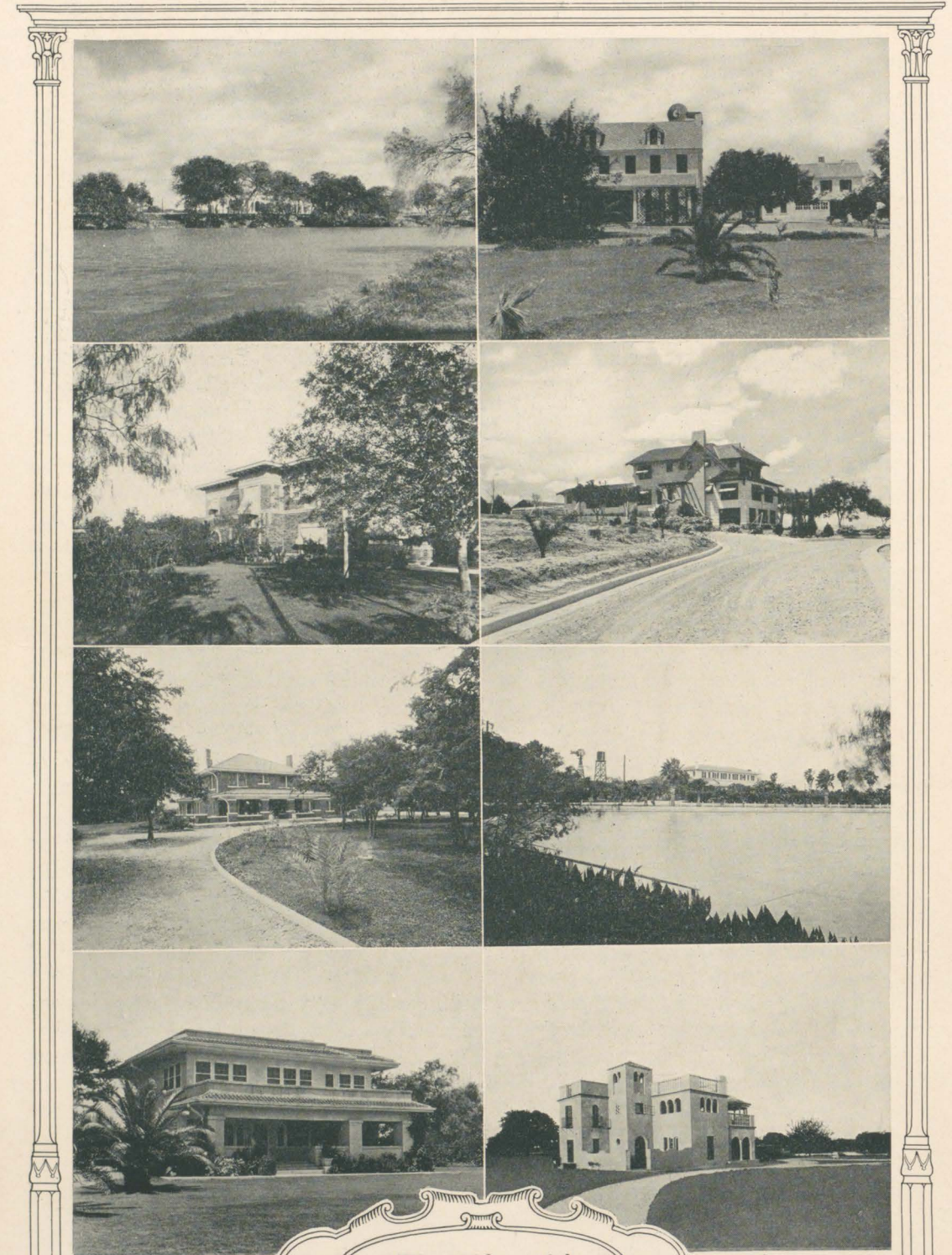
said that the Valley has "more big men" than other sections of equal area. Looking right on through, their women hold the candles.

The servant problem is solved by Mexican labor, largely. A well-trained Mexican servant gives good satisfaction under firm, kindly treatment. A fair and friendly dealing with a Mexican usually begets loyalty and dependability, a response to whatever is received.

Electricity is available for domestic purposes, even on many rural routes. Extension of high lines to hundreds of farm homes for lighting, cooking, heating, pumping, at a very low cost for service, makes the housewife's problem easier of solution, and beginning with the fall of 1927, natural gas was added, giving the entire Valley full service, one of the most important and needed developments.

It is noteworthy that no people living in the Valley came here of necessity. Some financial underpinning has accompanied ev-

← These are some of the homes that show the increasing prosperity of the Valley. Whenever occasion offers, beautiful and lavish hospitality is to be found in all of them and in many, many not shown here for lack of space.



*Types of beautiful homes where Valley visitors find true hospitality*





ery new citizen. Even if the investment has been small, cash has been necessary to get a start.

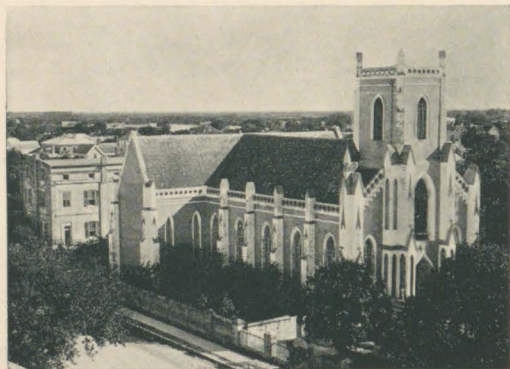
In thousands of instances, successful merchants, bankers, farmers, oil magnates, doctors, lawyers, musicians, artists, actors,



*Cutting down through the banks of the Arroyo Colorado to lay the big mains for natural gas supply which is one of the greatest assets the Valley has.*



*A suburban home with date-bearing palms in the foreground and a ten-acre orchard just beyond—at Mercedes.*



*Catholic Church at Brownsville built more than seventy-five years ago. It is considered one of the best examples of Gothic architecture in America.*

and other professional people have come to the Valley at the land man's expense. They have become consumed with Valley fervor and have hastened home to wind up affairs and return to locate in the land of sunshine and soft atmospheres. The result is that the average of citizenship in the Valley is said to be the highest type of any equal area and population in the country. Strangers coming into it immediately feel a mental stimulus so palpable they frequently comment upon it. It would appear to be a high-tension radio activity permeating all things and radiating from individuals. At all events, it is catching and is reaching out to the uttermost ends of the earth, drawing to itself the essentials of ultimate super-development.

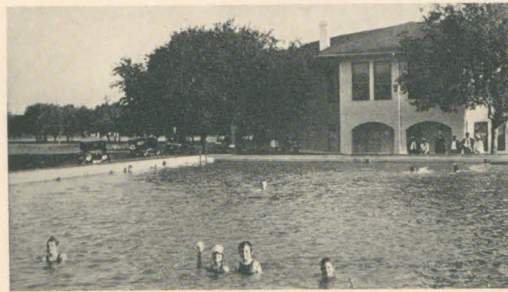
CHURCH AND SOCIAL ADVANTAGES  
VALLEY-WIDE ORGANIZATIONS  
MID-WINTER FAIR

MANY churches leaven the lump of Valley progress. Each town has the regulation representation of those denominations always found wherever a new country is being developed.

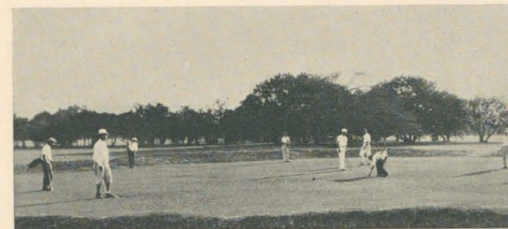
Within the past five years a building campaign of beautiful churches has begun. Sixteen churches in sixteen months—all beautiful and costly buildings—was the Valley record ending September 1, 1927. These share the honors with school buildings as centers of community activities. Several towns have Community Churches, served by a pastor acceptable to all denominations. Three denominations have recently celebrated seventy-five years of service to the people of the Valley.

The Valley grows in social importance. It has always enjoyed a reputation for unparalleled hospitality. The delights of formal and informal society are at hand for whoever seeks play.

There are several golf courses, happily located, and several more being built. The



*New \$40,000 swimming pool at the Brownsville Country Club, from three to eight feet deep. It is a popular place with the kiddies as well as the grown-ups.*



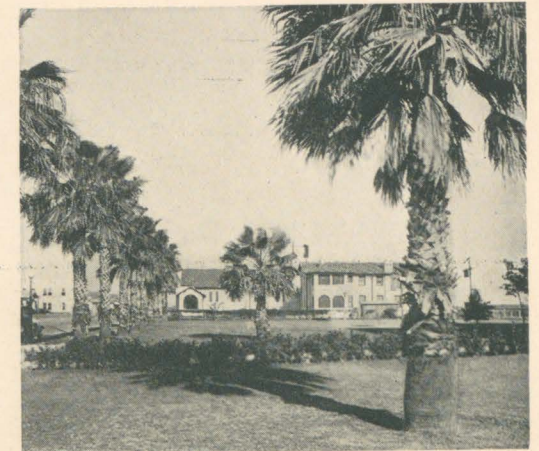
*"Came near making it in one"—on Brownsville's eighteen hole golf course.*

Brownsville Country Club has for years been the scene of notable gatherings and delightful hospitalities to distinguished Valley guests. The McAllen, Edinburg, and Llano Grande Country Clubs have excellent golf links. All of these clubs, anticipating future tourist demands, are planning extensive recreational facilities.

The crowning Valley-wide social achievement is the Queen's Ball at the Mid-Winter Fair at Harlingen, staged with every ear-mark of regal splendor at the opening of the Fair.

There are artists in the Valley who contrive and execute beautiful, brilliant pageants and spectacles for the Fair, entirely worthy of *The Spirit of the Valley*. Talent of every sort, much of it having evolved from high professional circles elsewhere, is abundantly available, all of it at the disposal of the Fair entertainment committee.

Not only is the Queen's Ball society's roll call, but the Fair has become the melting pot into which all Valley activities flow with constantly increasing momentum. The

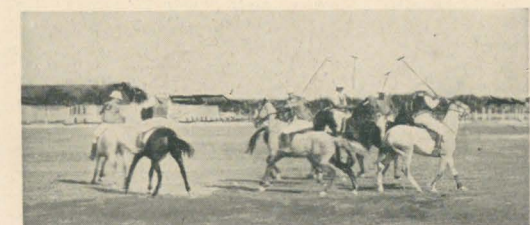


*From the campus of Brownsville's Junior College a charming view of the Episcopal Church and rectory is obtained.*

Valley's population includes people from every state in the Union—people of widely differing tastes, beliefs, habits. It is becoming more and more unified in the things that affect the entire area, and the Mid-Winter Fair is a leading factor in bringing this to pass.

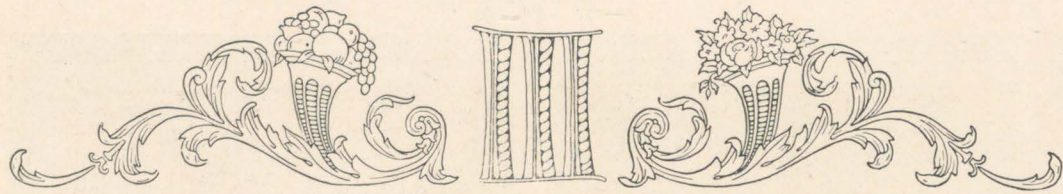
Already the Fair draws excursions from many points in Texas. It has become one of the most effective channels of advertising the Valley.

The Fair grounds belong to the city of Harlingen, and are leased to the Fair Association. Harlingen has built a fine auditorium on the Fair grounds to house the Fair and its entertainment features. The building will also be used for convention purposes, at the disposal of every town. A number of permanent buildings were included in the 1928 construction program.



*There are regular polo matches in the Valley, at Ft Brown and Ft. Ringgold. Showing the Ringgold team.*





INTERESTING AND RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT  
VALLEY HUNTING AND FISHING

A GREAT deal has been written about hunting and fishing in the Valley, some with, and much of it without accuracy. The facts herein offered are based upon information given by R. D. Camp, Federal Game Warden for the Lower Valley of the Rio Grande, headquarters at Brownsville.

Mr. Camp is a nationally known naturalist, recognized as authority on whatever relates to bird, animal, and fish life. For many years he represented both the state of Texas and the United States in the Valley. During this long period of service his eternal vigilance and untiring efforts have become the foundation for the preservation of the wild life of the section for the benefit of future generations. Also, the present abundance of game is due to the measures of protection he has been instrumental in promoting and maintaining. He states that he has been able to accomplish much because of the fine cooperation of Valley citizens, especially through the children and propaganda in the schools.

The Valley is a domain of delight to sportsmen, and will be, so long as there are great stretches of uncleared brush land and a multitude of unrestricted waters. It is a likely spot for good sport, one of the best in Texas. It is a type of country particularly favorable to wild life. The thick growth



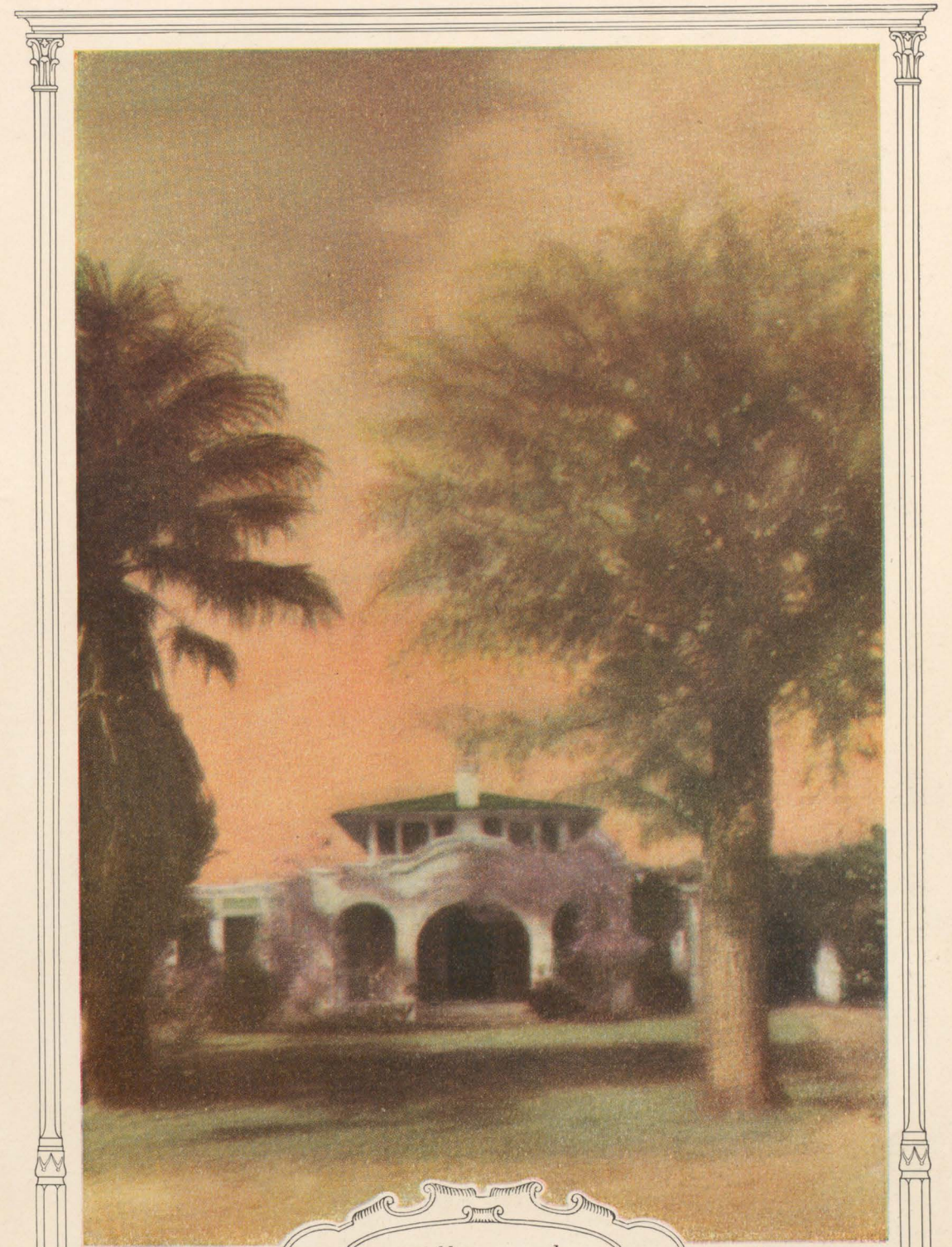
of native trees—all of which have thorns and blossom—with impenetrable barriers of cactus and scraggly brush, lend friendly refuge, giving the pursued a sporting chance of escape. It demands good sportsmanship to enjoy and execute pursuit—pursuit to the finish—into the depths of the jungle.

Before the railroad came in and scattered the brush, choice hunting ground ranged along the line where a string of towns now stands. A wagon and mule team furnished slow trail to game and fishing haunts. Today, an eight cylinder speedster or a flivver quickly annihilates long distances, and fine sport may be reached in an hour or two or more. Camping conditions are good, the weather being practically ideal at all times.

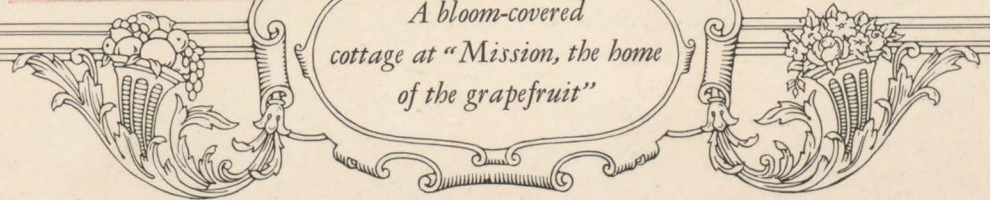
If one plans to go fishing or hunting, it is well to know the lawful seasons and game restrictions, the advantages and disadvantages for such sports afforded by the chosen field of adventure, the types of game and the varieties of fish to be found there. The average sportsman will study these laws and seasons carefully.

For the benefit of those who would seek the happy hunting grounds of the *Magic Valley*, a quotation of Texas game laws applicable to the four counties comprising the Valley is given

The glory of a Valley sunset is revealed in the background of a vine-clad bungalow at Mission. →



A bloom-covered  
cottage at "Mission, the home  
of the grapefruit"



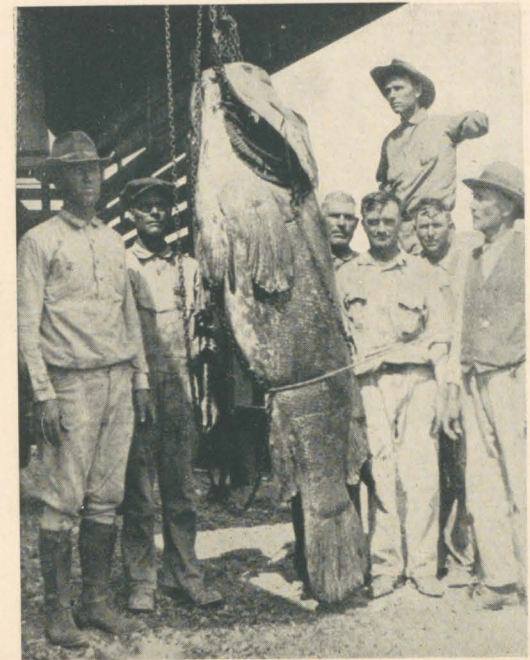




A Mexican  
mountain lion pausing to look  
before leaping



First day of open season clipped off by a Brownsville bunch.



One of the biggest fish stories the Valley has ever told—a deep sea king caught with a rod at the river's mouth.

here. This information alone is sufficiently magnetic to attract desirables who will come to play and linger to investigate native resources—climate, soil, living conditions, business opportunities.

Texas game laws affecting Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Starr Counties:

**OPEN SEASONS, DATES INCLUSIVE:** Deer (male with two-pronged horn) November 16—December 31. Quail, chachalaca or Mexican pheasant, December 1—January 16. Wild turkey gobblers, November 16, 1930. Mourning dove, November 1—December 31. White winged dove, August 1—September 30. Duck, goose, brant, jacksnipe, coot, gallinule, November 1—January 31. Rail other than coot or gallinule, September 1—October 31.

**NO OPEN SEASON:** Swans, wood duck, bitterns, little-brown, sand-hill and whooping cranes, grebes, gulls, herons, loons, petrels, band-tailed pigeons, terns, all

shore birds (except jacksnipe), and all insectivorous and song birds.

**BAG LIMITS AND POSSESSION:** Two deer; three turkey gobblers a season (1930). Twelve in all of quail and chachalaca a day, thirty-six in seven days, thirty-six of each in possession; fifteen doves and white-wings a day, forty-five in seven days or in possession. Twenty-five in all of ducks, rails, coots, gallinules, and jacksnipe a day, but not more than twenty jacksnipe or fifteen of any one species of rails (other than sora) and gallinules a day. Four geese and brant a day, twelve in seven days, and not more than fifty game birds of all kinds in possession.

Possession of all game permitted during open season and ten days thereafter.

**INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION:** Export prohibited of all game, except non-resident licensee may ship game lawfully possessed to his home for own use under affidavit (fee 25 cts.) that it was lawfully killed and will not be bartered or sold; provided that not more than two days' limit of migratory birds may be exported in any one calendar week. Game may be shipped to taxidermist for mounting under affidavit that shipper legally killed the specimen and that it is not being preserved for sale.

**SALE:** Sale prohibited of all protected game.



A purple gallinule posed with lifted foot for this picture, made by Guy Caldwell, naturalist, on Wells Reservation. The bird has a pale blue crown-plate, red bill tipped with yellow, and a purplish greenish gold body.

← Faces a motion picture camera just before the fatal lunge at his pursuers, and in mid-air receives a deadly bullet through the heart which lands him in the midst of a pack of the Valley's famous hounds. The intrepid camera man, Verne Sabin, was in the two hour chase and caught the portrait just before the last leap.





O. E. Stuart of Harlingen went a-fishing, and this is what he caught at Point Isabel.

The following authoritative list of types of game and varieties of fish in their proper order to be found in the Valley is furnished by courtesy of Federal Game Warden, R. D. Camp:

Turkey, two varieties; geese, six varieties; ducks, twenty varieties, seventeen found regularly; quail, two varieties; chacalaca; white-wing; mourning dove; jack-



A huge channel catfish caught in the Rio Grande, and a fresh water bass caught in Coffee Lake, near Brownsville.



This Brownsville fisherman is six feet two and measures small beside his catch of tarpon and giant stingray.

snipe; yellowlegs, two varieties; plover, two varieties; gallinule; coot or mud hen; rail, two varieties; all under game laws in sufficient quantities for shooting.

Deer; cotton-tail rabbits, jack-rabbits; peccary or javeline; coyote; coon; cat, three varieties; mountain lion; badger; 'possum; all but deer are non-game animals with no closed season or hunting-law restrictions.

SALT WATER FISHING: Tarpon—some of the best on the Texas coast; shark, two varieties; jew or june fish; ray, four varieties; red fish or channel bass; pike; trout; Spanish mackerel; flounder; drum; jack-fish; king-fish; croaker; sand trout; gaff topsail; crab; shrimp; oysters.

FRESH WATER FISHING: Black bass; gaspergou; blue cat; bream; closed season in Texas on bass, crappie, and trout in March and April.

Some varieties of both fresh and salt water fish are restricted by law as to size.

The keen sport of javeline hunting—with or without dogs—is little known to the general public. It is considered the gamest of sports by the initiated. The Game Warden says that a good hunter had rather shoot javeline than any game in Texas—a most exhilarating sport.

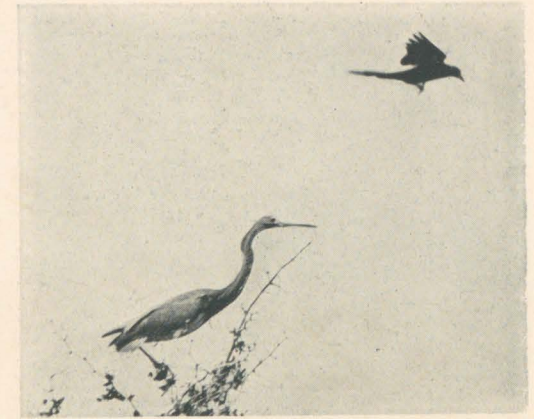
Point Isabel is headquarters for one of the most important fish industries on the Gulf of Mexico coast, and one of the largest. It is either first or second in shipments, always, according to Mr. Camp.



Due to the increasing importance of the fishing industry, a survey of Valley waters has been made, and the state Fish and Game Commissioner has recommended the cutting of channels through Padre Island into the Laguna Madre—to be maintained by the state—in order that sea water may circulate freely and constantly renew Laguna waters; also, that fish from the Gulf may find their way into the Laguna. This is part of a definite plan to greatly increase the fish supply in these waters. The dredging of the channel at Point Isabel has already improved fishing conditions in the Laguna.

For those who do not like the rocking of the boat, the jetties at the Point fill a long felt need. The completion of the jetties (1927) gives a sixteen to eighteen foot depth at the Brazos de Santiago Pass.

The longest ocean-beach driveway in the world extends one hundred and thirty miles on the Gulf side of Padre Island, connecting Point Isabel and Port Aransas. The road is already extensively used, connected during the first year with the main land by ferries, but causeways at either end are being built. This wonderful drive will afford one of the most valuable motorway connections with up-state points, and will connect with Cameron County's hard-surfaced Highways to the coast. Already camps, telephones, and gas stations are established along Ocean Beach Drive.



Great-tailed grackle looking for nest of Louisiana Heron in order to devour its eggs—photographed by J. J. Carroll on Wells Reservation.

THE Valley's bird life and native trees and flora deserve a full measure of treatment in any Valley story. They should be a large consideration to any Nature lover, especially where children are concerned, in choosing a place to live.

There are scores of varieties of birds, and the beautiful native trees are full of them. As stated elsewhere, "all Valley trees have thorns, and blossom;" and fragrance and exquisitely lace-like foliage might be added.

Let the odors of Araby fade!

The Valley's rich perfumes are age-less.

There are five important bird reservations on the lower Texas coast, four of them adjacent to the Valley, in the Laguna Madre, and one nearer to Corpus Christi.

The Texas Legislature has given complete jurisdiction and supervision of these reservations to the National Association of Audubon Societies for a period of fifty years. The Audubon Societies comprise the largest conservation organization in the world.

Green Island, situated between the Laguna Madre and the Gulf, is the best known of the bird reservations, and is one of the rare spots of interest and primitive beauty on the Valley coast. Because of the invaluable assistance rendered the Game Warden by the late Judge Wells, the Valley's most widely known character, in getting



Many celebrities have followed this famous pack of hounds on hunts staged by the Stuarts, of Stuart Place.





Entrance to Rabb's Palm Grove, which is the most picturesque spot on the entire Border. It contains two hundred acres of palm jungle mixed with acacia, huisache, river hackberry looking like silver birch, other native trees, and every kind of wild vine and flower. It is probable that it will eventually become a national park.



A river hackberry resembles a silver birch and adds a decorative beauty to the Valley's resacas and lakes, as do the water hyacinths.

protection for the wild life of this section, this island has been named the Wells Reservation.

There are thousands and tens of thousands of birds on the islands. During their breeding season, there are resident deputies to see that they are not molested.

Texas has the greatest number of recorded birds in the Union, six hundred and eight. Nowhere else in the state can so many varieties be seen as in the Valley, due to the fact that it is the dividing line between the tropical and the semi-tropical climate, the wild life interlapping.

A visit to any of these reservations is a very wonderful and interesting experience—a rare treat to a Nature lover.

#### HEAVEN LEFT ITS SMILE IN VALLEY CLIMATE

A FEW MILES from Brownsville, down at Southmost Plantation, on the Rio Grande, is the traditional "southernmost point in the United States." Its latitude is 25:50, and it lies about a hundred and sixty miles north of the tropics.

With the Gulf of Mexico immediately on the east, a semi-tropic, semi-arid climate bestows a physical comfort seldom equalled.

Geographical location would indicate extreme heat in summer, while quite the contrary is true. Cool breezes from the Gulf, with invariably cool nights, furnish a continual physical refreshment.

As early as the year 1800, Point Isabel was a summer resort, fashionable at that, according to the times. It still is one of the most delightfully cool spots on the lower shores of the Gulf of Mexico throughout the entire summer season. It is destined to become a great pleasure resort, beginning with the completion of the seaport there, and a present millionaire building program going rapidly forward. The long stretch of coast along the Laguna Madre and Padre Island, with more than a hun-



A group of hikers, visiting campers, taking in the wonders of Rabb's Palm Grove, below Brownsville.



Palm walks in Mercedes Park.

dred miles of perfect bathing beach on the Gulf side, will inevitably be discovered and promoted by large moneyed interests seeking playgrounds and climate. The first resort club on Padre Island was completed September first, 1927.

A former governor of a northern state, one of the great railroad magnates of America, came to the Valley to worry through a day of inspection. He remained a week. He said: "When the world finds out about your climate, it will not matter whether you grow carrots, cabbage, citrus fruits, or—*nothing*."

Tourists and home-seekers who come to the Valley in winter, and summer as well, find the climate reason enough to investigate living conditions.

The mountains of Mexico are only a night's ride—Monterrey and Saltillo, where many Valley folk spend vacation-time. Mexico City, the Paris of America, gets closer to the Valley by greatly improved transportation arrangements. Nowhere on the continent is there more of interest and delight and enlightenment to be found than is offered by this alluring city.



Gulf-Side Casino on Padre Island

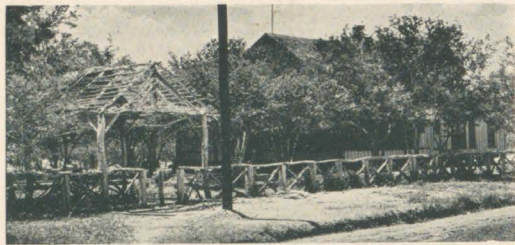


Palm Heights, McAllen. These stately sentinels remind one of tropical scenes in South American cities.



Some of the palms Alba Heywood planted in San Benito, called "The Resaca City."





Girl Reserve—Y.W.C.A.—permanent camp at Rio Hondo. High line denotes electric service.

Out in Starr County, the climate differs from that of the other Valley counties, though it is equally pleasant and healthful. Statistics show that the air current there sweeps in from the Pacific Coast through the chain of low-hung mountains and hills, evading traffic regulations and turning in U form back to the west, an entirely foreign current touching that end of the Valley. Because of this velvety dry atmosphere, Starr County is considered a perfect climate for throat or bronchial affections. Its altitude is five hundred and twenty-one feet above sea level.

Certain it is that the Valley has an ideal all-year-round climate conducive to health and pleasant living. The average mean temperature is 73 degrees; average maximum temperature, 82.06 degrees; average minimum temperature, 64.04 degrees; average annual rainfall, 28.16. The average rainfall varies slightly in different sections.

For some years a strict health record has been kept at Fort Brown, Brownsville's army post. Comparative statistics have placed this beautiful post as the healthiest in the United States army. The Brownsville Herald of January 30, 1927, carried the following statement:

"Fort Brown, Brownsville, is the healthiest spot in the United States, officers of the Twelfth Cavalry assert.

"They base the assertion upon the fact that the semi-yearly report of the Eighth Corps Area, covering the latter half of 1926, shows that during that period the average percentage of non-effectives—soldiers incapacitated from duty by reason of illness, injury, etc.—was only 3.06 as compared with the Eighth Corps average of 40.83 percent.

"The record made by Fort Brown was especially remarkable, officers state. Fort Logan, Colorado, a national health resort, ranked second in the Eighth Corps

Area, with an average of 10.75, or almost three hundred percent more non-effectives than Fort Brown.

"While comparative figures are not available from military sectors not included in the Eighth Corps Area, the fact that this area has the best record of any military subdivision in the United States, makes it apparent that Fort Brown leads all military posts in general health conditions.

"Excellent climatic conditions, good water, thorough sanitation, are all factors which contribute to the wonderful health record Fort Brown has made in recent years," one of the officers stated. "The records of the army post should convince the most skeptical that there is no finer climate than can be found here in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The record of only 3.06 percent non-effectives for a period of six months is, I believe, one of the best ever scored in the army."

Out at Ft. Ringgold in Starr County, there is a beautiful hospital building similar to the one at Ft. Brown. One of the officers, when told of Ft. Brown's remarkable health record said: "That's nothing: nobody is ever brought to our hospital except from accidents."

The Valley has excellent health units, both city and county. These affiliate with state units, and the progress already made in educational health service is nothing short of remarkable. The work is splendidly organized. Educational campaigns are systematically conducted in community centers and schools. A county health officer states: "We have little disease to contend with, for this climate, this wind, and this sunshine are the best remedies and the best preventives obtainable."

Included in the duties of these units is every sort of inspection of restaurants, hotels, soft drink establishments, dairies, markets, groceries, jails, and all places where sanitation is involved. As a consequence, the Valley is far along in measures of health protection.



Hospital at Ft. Brown—the healthiest army post in U.S.



### MILLIONS INVESTED IN VALLEY SCHOOLS

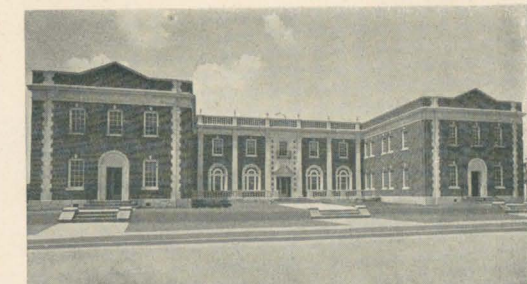
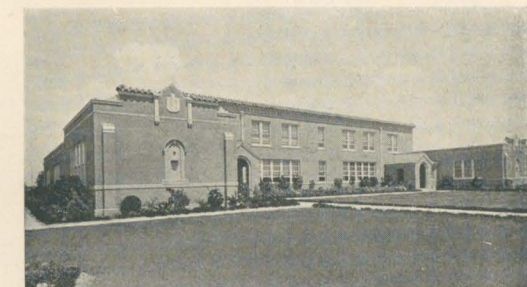
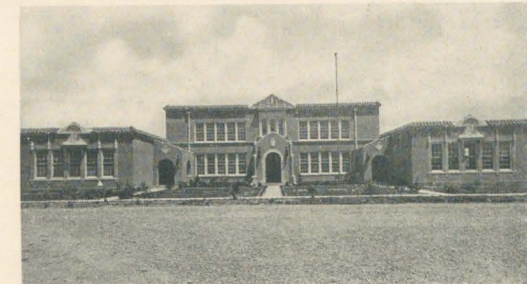
SCHOOLS in the Valley may be called its chief asset, considered as index of the calibre of citizenship. It seems a matter of pride in each town and rural community to build a more beautiful school than the one just completed in the next town. One, two, three, four, five or six public school buildings will be found in a single town. In some instances, an exclusive building, just as good as the others, will be found in the Mexican quarters of a town for Mexican children in grammar school.

Every rural section of the Valley is blessed with a fine school building which is used as a community center. Here, Home-Demonstration meets, 4H clubs, singing-bees, and other forms of rural activities are held.

The majority of the schools are independent school districts. Valley school bond issues are the easiest things to promote and sell. Many Mexican towns on the American side of the river are very progressive. A community of three hundred population, including half a dozen villages, all Mexican, voted a bond issue of more than three hundred thousand dollars for a school building and teachers' dormitory (Tobasco Community). The splendid buildings stand on a hill by the Highway, far removed from the villages. They make a wonderful show of prosperity for this rich farming district. It is worthy of note that the Valley's Mexican population is receiving the highest type of education in English in ideal physical environment.

The very smallest of Valley villages voted a bond issue of thirty thousand dollars for a school. The cost of Valley school buildings ranges from twenty thousand to more than a third of a million dollars.

Valley schools are affiliated with higher institutions, and rank with the best in the United States. The teachers employed are the best obtainable, above the average. In many towns, teachers' clubs are provided,



Four of the seven buildings of Edinburg College, which includes what is said to be the largest active school district in the United States. The investment represents more than three million dollars.

with excellent living at a nominal cost. This simplifies the problem of securing and holding good teachers. Edinburg's new Teachers' Club houses ninety teachers. Many Valley schools have teachers' clubs.





Types of  
Valley city and rural schools,  
its greatest asset



Athletics and Interscholastics form important features of the year's program. Football, baseball, basketball, and tennis draw their fans from one end of the Valley to the other.

The schools have free compulsory health examinations at regular intervals. Dietetics with observation classes illustrate the results of a balanced ration. Excellent cafeteria lunch service is found in many of the larger schools, under the supervision of Parent-Teacher associations.

Free transportation is furnished children in many of the outlying districts. The Edinburg school district comprises 600,000 acres and is said to be the largest active school district in the country. Busses bring the children as far as twenty-five miles to and from school every day.

Every community has live and going Parent-Teacher associations. To these bodies credit is due for many modern and progressive features in the schools. Libraries, music, art, health, beautification, and social advancement are fostered by them. They cooperate with county school superintendents in placing exhibits at the Valley Mid-Winter Fair that would be creditable anywhere in the country.

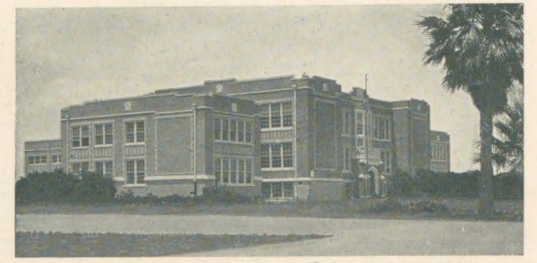
Brownsville was the first Valley town to secure a Junior College, and Edinburg the next, conducted in cooperation with the University of Texas, carrying freshman and sophomore University courses. According to press announcements, other Valley towns expect to have Junior Colleges.

There are a number of Catholic schools, all private, some with beautiful buildings.

There are, at the time this book is preparing, approximately one hundred and fifty school buildings in the Valley and more scheduled for building.

It may be said without fear of contradiction that the educational advantages to

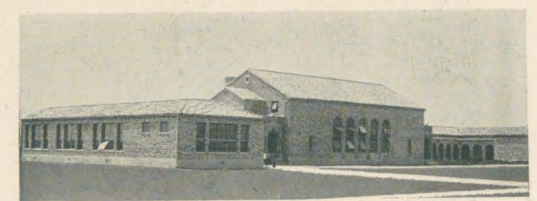
be had in the Valley should offer its greatest inducement to those seeking a home and proper environment for their children; for in no given equal territory will there be found a more wholesome, normal, and efficient school system.



The magnitude of the Pharr-San Juan school cannot be seen in the picture. In addition new buildings are contracted for.



Alamo is in the progressive class with its modern school and new paving program.



San Benito's beautiful High School Building.



Willacy County court house, at Raymondville which has concrete paved streets from curb to curb.

← Perhaps nowhere in America will be found such splendid school buildings, which represent millions of dollars of investment. The majority of them have college affiliation, and they rank with the highest public school systems of the country. The rural schools of the Valley amaze every Valley visitor.





# IV

## THE MAGIC OF IRRIGATION

NATURE'S treasure boxes are the irrigated sections of the world.

The far-flung fame of the Valley of the Nile has endured through the centuries. Its every foot of soil is so precious there is no allowance for roads, the canal banks affording the only lines of passage from place to place. Its villages are perched upon spots too high for irrigation and are so congested the natives dwell in primitive squalor.

The Imperial Valley of the Golden West, sending its hundreds of thousands of cars of fresh fruits and vegetables to every world market, buds, blooms, and fruits in highly intensified irrigated cultivation. The waters there are conserved in underground distribution laterals.

In the western and middle western states, and in a number of places in Texas, irrigation is turning barren lands into beautiful and fruitful gardens and farms.

Records give a Texan credit for having first discovered what lay beneath the vast wilderness of cactus, mesquite, ebony, and the impenetrable brush growth of what is now known as the Lower Valley of the Rio Grande, the *Magic Valley* of Texas.

But a stranger from afar has just now revealed startling facts about that matchless stream, the Rio Grande. In the sum-

mer of 1926, Mr. Wm. Clendennin, secretary of the American Association of Popular Research in Soilology and Irrigation, came to the Valley by invitation to make an analysis and report of the waters of the Rio Grande, and of the soils of every Valley county. So amazed was he at the silt content of the waters of the Rio Grande that he gave a number of talks before Valley Rotary clubs and commercial bodies, also the Lower Rio Grande Valley Press Association, to awaken them to the extraordinary facts in the case.

Upon his suggestion, the Lower Rio Grande Potato Growers Association cabled a challenge to the Egyptian government to compare the Nile waters with the Rio Grande. As a matter of information and great interest, copy of the cablegram is herewith appended. It was picked up by Associated Press and broadcast in newspapers all over the world.

The cablegram:

"Ministers of the Department of Irrigation and Agriculture of the Egyptian Government, Cairo, Egypt.

"The Rio Grande Potato Growers Association of the Rio Grande Valley of Texas sends friendly greetings to the growers of the historic Valley of the Nile.

"Like yourselves, we owe much, if not all, to the fertile waters of the great stream which by irrigation renders possible exuberant vegetation here in this Valley which is now incomparably the richest in the United States, and by scientific comparison, the richest in the

← Bounding Harlingen on the south, the Arroyo Colorado is the basis of a successful navigation bond issue for the purpose of dredging a ship canal to connect with the Intracoastal Canal which will join the Port of Corpus Christi with Port Isabel, the final unit of the Government's inland water-way program.





This is the method of irrigation almost universally used in the Valley up to the present time.

world. We also believe upon scientific assurance that this Valley has at last surpassed even the Nile Valley in these vital particulars, and we, therefore, venture the friendly and frank, but fearless challenge to you that the plantfood elements contained in the silt or sediment of the waters of the Rio Grande are in fact richer than those of the Nile. We respectfully challenge a world comparison on the per volume comparative proportions of the respective sediments of the two great rivers, which for the Nile in one part is six hundred plus, and for the Rio Grande one part in fifty, or approximately one thousand per cent superiority for the waters of the Rio Grande. We also claim that twenty-four inches of the Rio Grande irrigation water contains over eighty thousand pounds of sediment, or more than four tons per acre, and that in this total there is included over one thousand pounds of potash. We challenge the Nile also on the comparative contents of carbonates, sulphates, nitrates, potassium, calcium, and other materials ordinarily considered in adjudging the relative fertility of alluvial waters, and we engage to publish as may be determined and proven. We again send to the people of the richest Valley of the Old World our respectful best wishes and friendly greeting from the people of the richest Valley in the New World."

Few, if any, of the inhabitants scattered along the banks of the Rio Grande in the early days of Texas history had any knowledge of the potential values of the silt-laden soils upon which they grew gay flower gardens and patches of staple crops, such as corn, beans, and cotton, barely supplying necessary sustenance in a country far removed from the centers of commerce, iso-

lated as a result of continual Border warfare and banditry extending over a period of years.

Both incoming and outgoing traffic was principally through the Port of Brazos de Santiago, at Point Isabel, with wagon trains between there and Brownsville, and northern Mexico. Intermittently, small light draft river boats plied the Rio Grande as far west as Rio Grande City and Roma. A stage and wagon trail led out to Alice, Corpus Christi, and San Antonio.

The principal industries in those days were colonization—upon the part of Spain and Mexico—cattle raising, and warfare. For loyal services, the Spanish crown, and later, Mexico, granted to the faithful, thousands and hundreds of thousands of acres of land bordering on the Rio Grande. Title to this land included Riparian Rights—the perpetual use of river waters for a distance of eighteen miles from its banks for irrigation purposes. These vested rights go with the change of land ownership to this day.

One royal gift to a titled Spaniard who had rendered loyal and exceptional aid to the Spanish crown in colonizing its holdings in the New World approximated three million acres of land, with a hundred miles of river front. Historians state that he parcelled it out at ten dollars a league.

On the Texas side of the river, any quantity of land could be had at prices ranging from ten, twenty-five, and seventy-five cents an acre, and two dollars an acre was considered an excessive price. Today, these same lands, under irrigation and intensive cultivation, are valued at hundreds and thousands of dollars an acre, depending upon proximity to towns, the Highway, and transportation facilities.



The Rio Grande? No, just a glimpse of San Benito's irrigation and water supply. It is used for water pageants and carnivals on the annual Fourth of July celebration.



#### THE GREAT RIVER'S COURSE, POSSIBILITIES OF GRAVITY IRRIGATION

THE greatest romance of Nature has been the building for ages of the alluvial soils of the *Magic Valley* of Texas. The rich old stream originally named the Rio Bravo del Norte and now called the Rio Grande has stolen the precious jewels of Mother Earth and scattered them, layer upon layer, year in and year out for thousands of years, over a long, narrow strip of deep-buried foundation at rainbow's end.

The Rio Grande has tributaries from both of its sides. Its principal water-sheds affecting the Valley lie in the mountains of Mexico. At intervals of several years, usually, spring or fall rains swell the feeders flowing into the mother stream, and over-flows of varying stages spread gently over a limited surface of lands lower than its banks, a very small percentage of Valley area. The slow movement of the waters differs from over-flows elsewhere, and there is never a danger to human life. A curious fact of the river rises is that they frequently cut off "bancos" on both sides of the river, changing its course, but never its length.

Because of the increasing importance of the Valley's various money-crops and other development, necessity arose to safeguard all properties touched by over-flows by the building of giant levees to hold the sinuous Rio Grande to its legitimate pathway.

The Texas Legislature came in a body to look things over, and unanimously agreed to a twenty-five year tax remission in order that levees might be built and adequate drainage provided.

The results have been more than satisfactory: the splendid levees have gone forward in construction to the point of successful demonstration, and the resacas and spillways have absorbed excess waters.

The relation of flood waters to increased irrigation possibilities has been an absorbing topic of Valley discussion for many years. The great irrigation dams of the



"Silvery Rio Grande" can be seen at the bend above Roma, its silver sheen created by a late afternoon sun—where the Lower Valley begins.



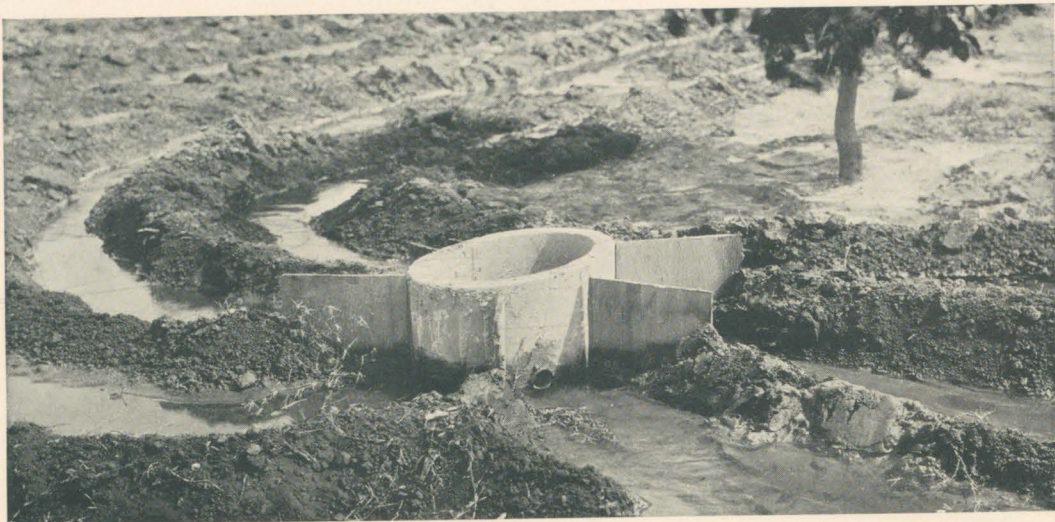
Headquarters of the largest privately owned irrigation system in the world—the American Rio Grande company, of Mercedes.



Valley canals furnish unlimited beautification possibilities. Willows, retama, huisache, and other native trees luxuriate in the surface moisture along canal banks.

west have intrigued the dreamers of the *Magic Valley*. With the question of division of the waters of the Rio Grande still unsettled between the United States and Mexico, the Valley has worked ceaselessly to arouse local, state, and national interest in securing impounded irrigation waters. Present activities at Washington and elsewhere would indicate a determination



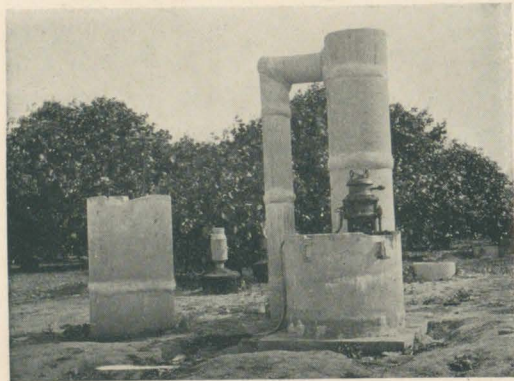


View of a modern underground concrete irrigation system lately installed on the H. B. Seay estate near Merced. All laterals of this perfect unit are enclosed, and modeled after the most approved methods employed in California.

to arrive at an early settlement of the Rio Grande problem.

It seems certain that sooner or later some form of Gravity Irrigation will give the Valley wider irrigation areas. A Valley authority states that the question is one of economics; lands in certain sections of the Valley can probably be served more economically by pumps, while the reverse is true of other sections. It is a matter to be determined by study and experiment, based upon fixed operating costs.

The unregulated flow of the Rio Grande has amply supplied the needs of the present



This is how water is lifted above the regular irrigation line through concrete pipes and laterals by electric pumps on the Seay estate.

irrigation districts. One of the Valley's nationally known engineers has made public the statement that "The Rio Grande brings down enough water to support an irrigation development extending over two million acres of land—on both sides of the river—when the flow is fully regulated and the water economically used." It has also been published that seventy per cent of Valley irrigation waters is lost through seepage and evaporation up to this time.

Logically, the time draws near when canals will be concreted and distribution laterals will be enclosed. In fact, this movement is already well under way. Growers are beginning to find concrete lined ditches savers of time, water, and money. No more water was used for the irrigation of four hundred and twenty-five thousand acres in 1927 than was used to irrigate two hundred and twenty-five thousand acres in 1919, according to figures given the press.

The world's largest privately owned irrigation project waters the Merced and the Weslaco tracts. A very extensive underground concrete irrigation unit is in use on the company's demonstration farm. By scientific methods, hills "above the irrigation levels" are watered according to



most approved systems of California.

The same good engineer who smashed the belief of a possible shortage of irrigation waters of the Rio Grande, claims that irrigation may be greatly increased by utilizing the untouched resources of lakes and resacas, of the Arroyo Colorado, and canals. The use of these waters would justify hundreds of new small irrigation projects. He also advocates the building of dams on Devil's River and other American tributaries for Valley irrigation purposes, regardless of the disposition of the international question of Rio Grande waters. The Devil's River reservoir probably would double the presently available irrigation supply of the Valley, which would later be tremendously increased when a treaty with Mexico would admit of Rio Grande storage dams. He says that the Arroyo Colorado holds great irrigation possibilities for the lands on either bank, the former saline properties of its waters having largely disappeared. This is evidenced by the luxuriant vegetation now found all along its way, and the fact that cattle are drinking from it. The sweetening of the Arroyo has been due to the free turning of surface drainage waters into it since the Rio Grande overflow of 1922. The Arroyo Colorado is designated a Government floodway.

The Valley chapter of the American Association of Engineers has several nationally known members. One of these has said: "The larger the irrigated area, the stronger, grander, and more secure will be all the institutions of the Valley. The proper full development of this section is not only a great opportunity for our people, but a serious obligation."

Nearly half a million acres of land in irrigation districts are served by more than two thousand miles of canals at the present time. The investment in irrigation systems approximates fifteen million dollars. There are twelve large and a number of small systems, and others in process of building.

In early days getting water when need-



Concrete lined irrigation ditch.

ed, and enough of it, was a hazardous undertaking. Within the recent past there has been an immeasurable improvement in irrigation methods, efficiency, and dependable supply. The low flows of the river have largely increased, due to regulation resulting from power development on the Conchos, and the return flows from irrigation on the middle Rio Grande, under the Elephant Butte reservoir, and on the Pecos.

The average farmer coming to the Valley to live knows little about irrigation and water taxes and rentals. He "did not have it back home," consequently he has to grow accustomed to "throwing money in the ditch," literally. But when a fair comparison is made of irrigation costs in other sections and in the greater benefits derived from Valley soils as compared to ordinary soil in a one-crop country, the water tax becomes a minor consideration.

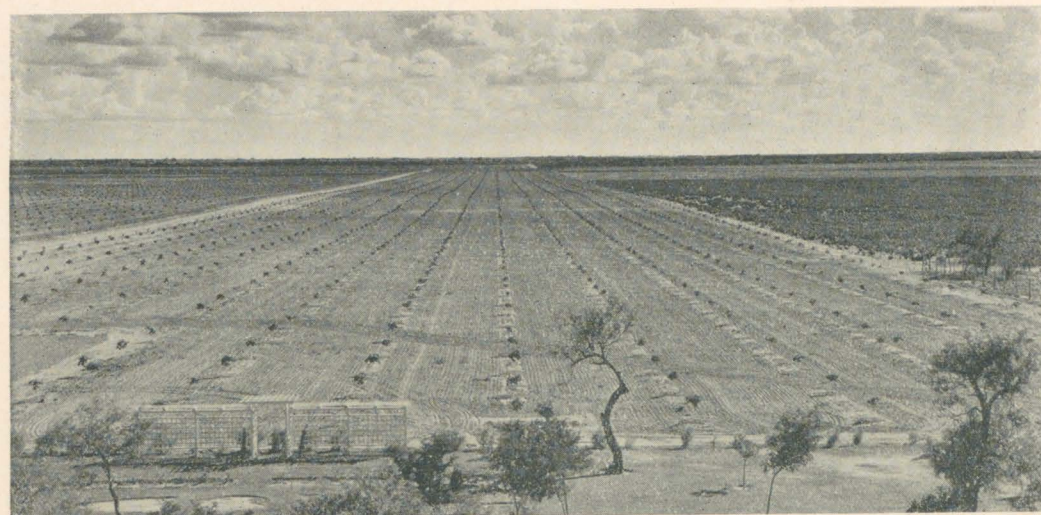
The irrigation districts are well organized and directed by highly efficient engineers. They are making every effort to render the best possible service, and are succeeding in reducing irrigation costs as rapidly as is consistent with present conditions.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Users Association is a federation composed of the majority of the farmers in the irrigation districts. It is one of the strong bodies of the Valley, and has rendered good service to the cause of flood control and drainage. It ardently supports every measure and person in favor of Gravity Irrigation.



Year-old Citrus trees in non-irrigated section.





*View of two-mile long rows of young citrus trees on Engleman Rancho, near San Carlos. From the four-story tower in the center of it one can see the water reservoirs of five towns on the new Southern Pacific Line between Edinburg and Harlingen.*

the importance and necessity of preparation to handle the enormous shipments of fruit cannot be over estimated. With augmented transportation service and widely organized marketing facilities the marketing problem will become simplified. Judicious advertising and extension of the circle of markets, and always and above all, *Valley fruit quality*, have already created a demand greater than today's supply.

Plans are announced for the construction of adequate cold storage facilities in the Valley, and other concentration points, to enable Valley growers to control distribution of both fruit and vegetables.

Citrus growing is by no means confined to the lands under irrigation. Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Starr Counties, also Brooks County, joining the Valley on the north, jointly have hundreds of thousands of acres of non-irrigated land, much of it as fertile as that in the irrigation districts. Many citrus groves, as beautiful as the best, flourish and produce good revenue with no other moisture than rainfall. One of the show places of the Valley is a fifty-acre orchard in the heart of the non-irrigated area that is said never to have been irrigated or protected by heaters.

While lemons and limes are more susceptible to cold than other varieties of citrus, there are seedling lemons in the Valley forty and fifty years old that have produced thousands of lemons in a season up to the present time. A well-known Valley nursery-woman asserted that she paid all household running expenses, including food, from an acre of lemons. A single lemon tree at Rio Grande City is said to have supplied the town with lemons for years. It stands, as large as a giant apple tree, in a yard where a famous cantina once flourished. The natives point to it and shake their heads—a reminder of long-lost delights.



*This illustrates scientific distribution of irrigation waters by the concrete route, applied to citrus growing.*





The owner was offered \$10,000 for one acre of this grove and refused it. Can you blame him?



One of the several beautiful young citrus groves of W. F. Shaw, of Mercedes. The trees were five years old when photographed.



The famous Hickman citrus ranche at Rio Hondo which recently sold for a record price.



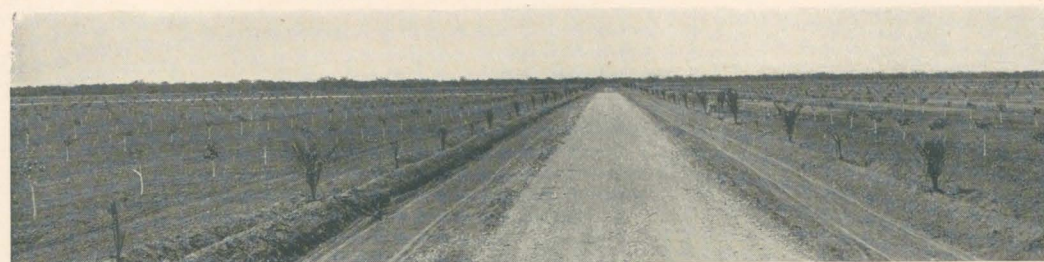
A ten year old citrus grove near Lyford—non-irrigated section.

From a financial point of view, citrus growing is staple and stable in the Valley. Yield from a single tree depends upon the care given that tree, which may be compared to a child or a thoroughbred animal.

A western race-track man owns a grove in the Valley. He gathered ten boxes of fruit from four year old orange trees. He treats his trees like he treats his fine horses—and they show their gratitude.

Seventy trees to the acre is the regulation planting stipulated by the Nurserymen's Association. The official average return, net, from eight to ten year old trees, is given at from six hundred dollars an acre, and up, depending, of course, upon market price. As production increases, averages may vary, larger production lowering financial average, although the yield per tree increases with each added year of growth. There is every reason to believe that a citrus grove well cared for will never get below the point of a good return upon the investment.

It would be impossible to calculate at this time to what proportions the Valley's citrus industry will develop. Soils and climatic conditions favor it above any citrus area in Continental America, so Government statistics now show: the frost hazard is far below that of other sections. The industry is in a pioneer stage.



Twenty-five or more miles of such roads run through one of the Valley's great new citrus developments of several thousand acres at Progresso.

At the SOUTHERN PACIFIC hearing before the Interstate Commerce Commission for permit to enter the Valley, government authorities stated that at least seventy-five per cent of Valley lands are especially adapted to the growing of citrus, the greater portion of which has no equal in the world (comparative statistics).

With less than a hundred thousand of a half million acres planted to orchards in the irrigated districts so far, and only a very limited proportion of adaptable non-irrigated citrus lands now producing, the imagination falters in attempting to gauge this prophecy of the Valley citrus industry's future.

The price of good citrus land ranges from a hundred and fifty dollars in the non-irrigated sections to many hundreds an acre, under irrigation, and, for developed orchards, thousands of dollars an acre, depending on accessibility to Highway and railroad, and—the whim of the owner. The Valley's biggest grower was offered ten thousand dollars cash for a single acre of a magnificent twenty-acre grove—and declined it.

So important has the industry become that successful effort was made in 1927 to secure legislative protection against imported trees, carriers of multifarious citrus pests and diseases. Thanks to the combined labors of individuals, organizations, and Valley representatives at Washington and Austin, the Agricultural Departments are establishing strenuous measures of protection for the Valley's citrus industry.



The views shown are of a vineyard at Rachal. The first one was made in May, the second in August, and the third in October. Does it look like Magic to you?





A FEW VALLEY SPECIALTIES



Famous Rio Grande City date tree which bears hundreds of pounds of dates of a very delicious variety each year.

SOMETIMES leading magazines publish long illustrated articles about commercial date culture in America. They cover the native home of the date, the scientific secrets of propagation and yield, and, "the only places in the United States where commercial dates are successfully grown."

As yet, the *Magic Valley* of Texas has not been designated in this rare list as even a possible date-producing area.

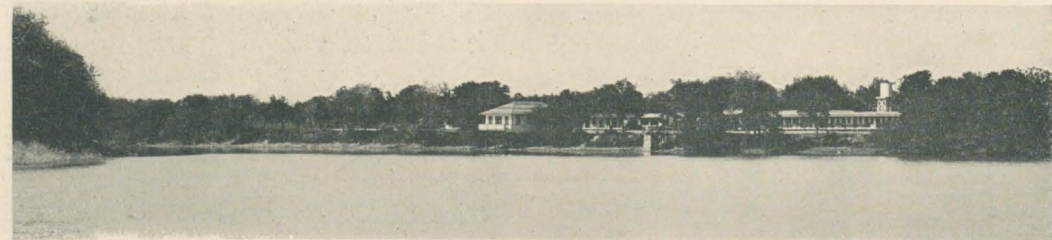
Notwithstanding the omission, from one end of the Valley to the other, in irrigated and non-irrigated localities, large date-bearing, honey-brewing palms spread their gracious fronds beneath a smiling sky, and the delicious evidence of their service to a grateful palate may be found in mid-summer season at so much per pound, fresh. And there are many people who say there is no fruit in the world comparable to a fresh date.

It is interesting to note that the Government made rather large appropriation some years ago for research in the Orient to find varieties of dates adaptable to this country, the Valley specifically included. So far as official records go, little has been given out on the subject, and no recognition has yet been given the Valley as a place favorable to date culture, other than recent report that an Arabia date is to be used for experiments in the Valley.

This brief chapter on Valley date growing is given as a matter of information, and the facts recorded are verifiable by the eyes at any time.



A row of commercial date bearing trees at Mission on the Wright place. They were nineteen years from the seed when this picture was made.



Among the beautiful lakes of Hidalgo County is Laguna de las Leonas, south of Weslaco. Its banks will soon be adorned with many fine winter homes established by men who are developing a large citrus acreage surrounding it.



Valley escarole, grown near La Villa, and shipped in large quantities via the Southern Pacific. It belongs to the lettuce family, evidently, and is much in demand on eastern Italian markets.

Up to 1928, no local survey had been made (or at least, not made public) as to the number of bearing date trees in the Valley. It is safe to assert that there are several hundred, many of which bear hundreds of pounds (each) in a season, and have, for years. There are a number of varieties, all of fine quality, and they sell at a fancy retail price. Little effort has been made as yet to learn curing methods, possibly for the reason that the present supply meets immediate consumption, right from the tree.

A colorful instance of investigation in connection with making a picture for this book is that of the Wright place, at Mission, which has forty-three bearing date trees.

Mr. Wright related that some one made his father a present of about ten pounds of bug-eaten dates. At that time—more than twenty years ago—Mr. Wright, senior, had a small nursery at Mercedes. He planted the seed, not expecting a thing; but they came up. Later, he moved his nursery to Mission and transplanted his date palms. They proved to be of several fine varieties. Mr. Wright procured all available data, bulletins, and literature on date culture.

He and his sons learned scientific methods of pollenization. His success with date growing has been told in print many times.

At the present time, this group of commercial date palms—twenty or more years from the seed—is the largest bearing grove in the Valley.

Down on the banks of the Rio Grande,



A chicory field on the Mercedes tract north of Elsa, on the Southern Pacific. The roots look like long white radishes, taste bitter, and sometimes get into the coffee pot.





in Cameron County, below Brownsville, a well known Texas horticulturist is putting five hundred acres into commercial date palms. It is a new proposition, and data about it is not now available.

Most favorite ornamentals everywhere in the Valley are banana hedges. Holding great bunches of fruit, in many places they flourish like the proverbial green bay tree. The Valley fruit is smaller and shorter, and of different shape and flavor from the commercial banana known to the market. But—

A Weslaco farmer now has a large bearing Orinoco banana grove. Unusually cold weather wilted his plants. Being a newcomer, and not knowing that banana plants always wither from cold, he was greatly discouraged.

*It seldom gets or stays cold enough in the Valley to penetrate the warm soils to the roots of any growing thing.* The gentle urge of Nature quickly brought the tiny shoots to the surface. Delighted, the farmer watched them until they rose fifteen feet into the air. Some of the plants in this single year's growth held bunches containing as many as a hundred and ten bananas. These he sold at five cents apiece, or fifty cents a dozen. According to his experience, he considers a banana grove a cheerful and paying investment.

This same farmer made fourteen hundred dollars on three acres of vegetables and gathered much honey from a long row of bee-hives.

An Associated Press bulletin, broadcast in March, 1927, is re-printed here for the reason that the avocado—or aguacate, as it is called in the Valley—appears to be highly adapted to Valley soils and climate. There are many bearing trees, but so far,

there are no extensive groves. Much of the year the native Mexican aguacate is in the markets across the river, but cannot be brought to the American side because of strict laws against fruit seed importation. It differs considerably from the alligator pear, although of the same family:

“New York, N. Y., Mar. 6.—(AP)—

“Science seeking a reason for fruitless orchards in California and Florida, has discovered a ‘new and astonishing type of flower behavior involving daily reversal of sex,’ it was announced in a report describing five years of research made public Saturday at the New York Botanical Garden.

“The research was undertaken by Dr. A. B. Stout, director of the laboratories at the Garden, in an effort to solve the difficulties of the growers of the avocado, commonly known as the alligator pear.

“He found that the flowers of the avocado, unlike any other known flower, are divided into two main groups. In one group the flowers are male in the morning and female in the afternoon, and the other group, female in the morning and male in the afternoon.

“As this fact was previously unknown, growers have unwittingly planted large blocks of similar types together, with the result that fertilization was almost impossible.

“‘Discovery of these sex secrets,’ said the report, ‘makes possible new methods of mating through interplanting of types which will check the marked decrease in the yields of fruit when trees of only one variety are planted together.’”

Some of the specialties aside from the regulation Valley crops are, papaya (native), earliest cantaloupes on the market, strawberries, dew-berries, figs, roselle (used for jelly that rivals guava), paper-shell pecans, walnuts. An authority on the subject says that English walnuts will bear well in the Valley and that the resaca lands are especially adapted to their growth.

The so-called wild olive decorates the Valley landscape profusely. Local newspapers carried the story that a California grower will plant perhaps fifty acres to commercial olives as an experiment.

AN enchanting prospect for a great new Valley industry is that of grape culture.

Where many varieties of beautiful, luscious grapes have thrived and grown abundantly for a number of years. Grapes require little care and no irrigation, and are adaptable to Valley soils in every section.



*The Valley  
soon becomes a home of  
vineyards*





*Papaya trees (native) at Brownsville, highly decorative, and with fruit rich in pepsin. It is eaten like cantaloupe.*

Grapes offer unlimited possibilities for safe investment if the rules of exhaustive experiment hold good.

As wonderful grapes as ever grew have already grown abundantly in the Valley. In well known cases vineyards have produced magnificently, and thrived long enough to prove the feasibility of extensive culture for commercial purposes.

It has been said that the wild mustang root is necessary to long life of a grape vine in Valley soils. It is hardy as sour orange, and disease resistant. As a Valley citrus tree requires sour orange root, so does the commercial grape need a mustang root for safety, according to statement of a local horticulturist, who after much experiment has introduced the Valley to budded grape vines, "any variety, so it's on mustang root."

It is well established that grapes require very little care and a minimum protection from cold and do not need irrigation.

"Sandy soil in a live-oak country" is also favorable to grape-growing. Much of

this is to be found in the new territory opened up by the SOUTHERN PACIFIC between Falfurrias and Edinburg.

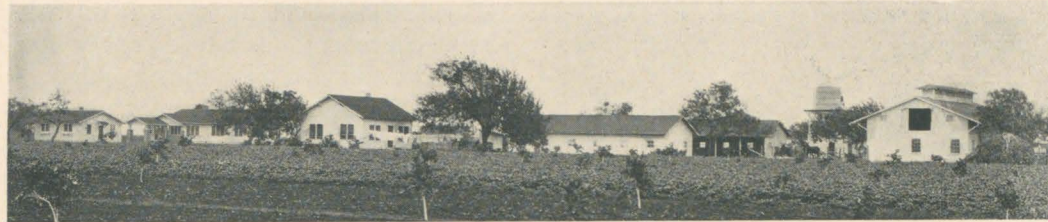
One of the visions of the late W. R. Scott, President of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES, was a continuous landscape of beautiful vineyards lying on either side of the railroad right of way for many miles, replacing the present timber growth. A development plan of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC is to promote the fulfillment of this vision. Knowing that the finest of grapes have been and are now being produced in this part of Texas, it will not be a dreamer's dream, but a realization of the manifold treasures locked within the hope-chest of a virgin soil.

BE PREPARED TO BELIEVE  
ANYTHING TOLD ABOUT VALLEY  
TRUCK CROPS

IT is conceded that ninety per cent of Valley soils are tillable. It is also said that ninety-nine per cent will grow SOMETHING: the so-called poor coast lands, hemp and



*Many varieties of figs are grown in the Valley.*



*The state of Texas has established this experiment station in the Valley at an initial cost of \$50,000. It is located at Llano Grande in the heart of one of the richest soil areas.*

cotton, if properly drained, and the sand ridges, plums and grapes.

The state officials at Austin realized the importance of extensive Agricultural experiment in the Valley, and appropriated fifty thousand dollars for a demonstration farm, located at Llano Grande, in 1923. It is situated in the heart of the irrigated section. It is conducted by efficient agents, and renders a valuable service to growers, which will become more significant as time measures the success or failure of its various experiments. Recently the Legislature has made additional special appropriation to cover citrus culture research which will include experiments in soil foods.

Unofficial experiments have been going on for a good many years. Some of the actual records of super-productiveness of Valley soils may sound like chapters from the ravings of the late Munchausen. Nevertheless, every one quoted herein is subject to verification, and welcome. While a phenomenal yield in these instances does not indicate the average, by any means, it does show that it was not only possible in a given instance, but it may also occur again under given conditions.

Perhaps the most romantic instance of record yield is that of a farmer on the Mercedes tract who planted sixteen acres of parsley in 1923-24—just plain garnish variety. There is affidavit duly signed and witnessed that he received seventy-five thousand dollars for that one crop; a whale of a story, but absolutely true. It is in order to tell, however, that this fabulous sum was the result of a bare market; pars-

ley beds all over the country were frozen that season, and the Mercedes parsley was the only available plank steak garnishment anywhere. So the price was not so remarkable after all.

Since the broadcasting of the parsley deal, much of the herb has been planted, but no extraordinary sales have come to light. One big concern, however, grows acres and acres of the stuff every year. They also grow several hundred acres of fancy truck for a New York market. Perhaps St. Peter knows the secret of rich returns from their parsley patch—but he won't tell.

Parsley possibilities are intriguing. One small boy who had a craze for movies could not persuade his mother's pocketbook to



*Broccoli is a favorite Italian vegetable, similar to cauliflower. This Valley field is next to the escarole patch shown elsewhere in this chapter.*





Valley corn in April. An authority on corn says that almost all Valley-grown corn is grade A.

meet a daily demand for the price of admission. The school-teacher mother in between times planted two eight foot rows of parsley in the back yard beside other two rows of potatoes. The enterprising boy plucked the parsley and parted with it daily at the kitchen door of the local hotel, thereby keeping himself in cash the entire season. A small but neat accomplishment.

A farmer living east of Edinburg gathered approximately a carload of cabbage to the acre early in the year 1927. On April 13th, this same land was planted to corn, and in exactly two months and seven days he gathered fresh, fine roasting ears from it. How's that for "Magic?"

A well-known Valley elevator man says that most of the corn raised in the Valley is GRADE A.



No, not maiden-hair ferns—rabbit heaven—a Valley carrot patch.

Farmers conform to styles in planting just as consistently as a true flapper keeps to the prevailing fashion in hair bobs.

The Valley planting vogue for many seasons past has been, principally, carrots, beets, cabbage, and other calico-cat varieties. While these fruits of the soil and toil are the best of their kind and in perfectly good Valley form, unless shipped in mixt car lots with egg-plant, spinach, peppers, beans, and other such truck, they often



A field of summer squash on a Valley truck farm.



Beans grow all over the place down in the Valley. The patch shown here grew under an April sky, and brought good revenue to a Sharyland farmer.



Nineteen acres in beets north of Weslaco. The owner made two crops between January and May. For the first crop he received \$1,500, and for the one shown here, \$2,000.



meet a rummage sale at market, sometimes not bringing their pay for picking, to say nothing of shipping cost.

More recently, a better diversification prevails. Farmers are learning what the standard money-crops are. And they have tired of individual selling failures. They are beginning to enter into marketing agreements—AND TO STAY ENTERED—in order to stabilize products and prices.

Tomatoes, potatoes, beans, cantaloupes, early onions and roasting ears and strawberries usually have a steady demand and price.

But two new faces in fashion row bid fair to win the popularity prize, and to bring new joy into many a farmer's heart.

Celery experiments on the Mercedes tract in 1926 proved that the Valley is an ideal location for extensive celery growing. Experts brought from Michigan celery centers declare that Valley celery is as fine as can be produced.

The fact that a Michigan celery ranche averages four acres, and a grower makes enough on his three months' crop to live in comfort the balance of the year, lends speculative interest to the future of the celery deal in the Valley. The net price realized on what celery was grown in 1926 was a close match to the parsley receipts. Only a few acres were planted the first



A Valley celery ranche in May. Much acreage is now being planted to celery. It grows perfectly in the Valley and brings a very high price.

season, but each successive season has added large acreage. Services of an expert are available for advice and instructions on how to grow perfect celery.

But the real sensation of the year 1927 was the opening chapter of the asparagus deal, obviously the most important event up to that date in Valley truck-growing society.

A small group of growers on the Mercedes tract found, upon investigation, that asparagus crowns from twelve to sixteen years old were thriving in small clumps scattered over the Valley. This proved that practically any Valley soil is adapted to asparagus. They went quietly about obtaining crowns and organizing an association, beginning with about thirty members.

It was the first crate of twelve bundles that blew up the calico cat. Picked, packed, photographed, affidavited, and shipped, it brought seventy-five dollars net. Regular "first bale" premium affair. Each crate of the limited 1927 crop thereafter brought thirty-six dollars to the growers, according to local press statements. Sounds fictitious, but is verifiable. Asparagus at a dollar a crate is a money maker, according to a well-known Valley producer.

The really important facts about asparagus are: that it likes any Valley soil, that the demand for it is world-wide, constant, and greatly exceeds the supply at all times, that the price is always good, that the



The asparagus deal of 1927 started something. The bundles you see here were part of the first crate which sold for seventy-five dollars.





*A good model for a Valley Corsage is the spray from a stalk of Greer Staple cotton which produced two bales to the acre, near Donna.*

Valley's crop will be the earliest to reach the market and will hit the top price.

A little bit of color is found in the fact that asparagus has to be cut every day: *it grows as much as nine inches in twenty-four hours*—affidavit stuff.

When news of the asparagus episode struck throughout the Valley, about every farmer left off plowing and flocked to Mercedes to investigate: he returned to taw brimming with hope and enthusiasm.

#### COTTON DESIGNATED THE VALLEY'S MONEY CROP

SINCE 1922, cotton production in the Valley has increased in compound ratio. Having the earliest maturity in the United States places it on the market weeks ahead of any other cotton producing area.

Generally speaking, the Valley staple is superior, and prices have been so good that cotton has become a solid foundation of prosperity and is considered a leader money crop. As long as good prices obtain, cotton may be grown profitably on irrigated lands. There is always the prospect



*An April cotton patch in the Valley.*



of fair prices for the first cotton to reach the market.

With the enormous sales of land in the non-irrigated Valley districts since 1925—to be planted almost exclusively to cotton—it appears certain that the Valley will in a few years become one of the great cotton producing and industrial centers of the United States.

For a considerable time cotton mill owners have been investigating conditions and industrial possibilities in the Valley. Large production of high-grade cotton, abundant cheap labor, perfect climatic conditions, adequate motive power, offer a combination that will attract such investment, eventually.

The Mexican laborer, the most skillful of humans in the mere use of his hands, is undoubtedly the choice of races for cotton-mill service.

Millions of dollars are invested in gins, compresses, cotton-oil mills, and sales-service in the Valley. Everything demanded by the grower is embodied in this ginning and marketing efficiency service.

The Valley's cotton industry is stabilized, if for no other reason than the fact that the average farmer is born to and fed



*When Valley cotton grows two bales to the acre its farmers wear a smile that won't come off.*

on the idea that cotton is the mainstay of life: he naturally clings to his "money crop." The estimated cotton planting in the Valley for 1928 is 320,000 acres.



*Green wrapped tomatoes bring a fancy price, and hundreds of such fields are seen in the Valley truck season.*



*This beautiful citrus orchard with palm wind brake covers fifty acres and is in the city limits of Raymondville—non-irrigated territory.*





## FARMING IN THE NON-IRRIGATED TERRITORY AND IN THE ARTESIAN BELT

THE million and more non-irrigated acres of land in the Valley present a fascinating prospect in reckoning the future greatness of its resources.

Since 1923, some of the largest ranches in South Texas have been subdivided into farm tracts and placed on the market. A number of these are in the Lower Valley—in the non-irrigated portions of it. The soils in certain sections of it are the richest of the rich, highly adapted to intensive Agricultural and Horticultural cultivation. A clay sub-soil underlies thousands of acres, holding the moisture of rainfall, which is conserved by scientific methods. Not anywhere on earth is the quality of these soils surpassed, according to statistics.

For years, low-priced non-irrigated Valley lands have grown early staple crops—cotton, corn, onions, cane, and other feed crops—yielding prosperity to a rapidly increasing population.

In 1925, a new era dawned in the so-called dry land country. One of the biggest and most reliable colonization companies purchased one of the old ranches on the north side of the Valley, comprising forty-seven thousand acres, and sold it in subdivided farm tracts within eighteen months. Thousands of laborers cleared the brush and it was plowed and planted—largely to cotton—before the ashes were cold from stump-burning.

Also, immediately bordering on the north of the Valley, and adjoining this development, on the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINE be-

tween Edinburg and Falfurrias, one individual bought a forty thousand acre tract, which, according to press reports, would be planted to cotton and other crops. This section is in the artesian belt.

Three and a half miles north of La Blanca, on the SOUTHERN PACIFIC, just beyond irrigation, one successful colonizer has seven thousand acres of a magnificent new development. From the top of an unique tower rows of twenty thousand young citrus trees extend two miles in every direction—a most alluring sight, and only the beginning of development there.

These are but three examples of unusually large development in non-irrigated territory in practically the beginning of its intensive development.

While Riparian Rights to waters of the Rio Grande do not extend to the "sand belt" there is abundant supply of sweet well water at shallow depth, and the ARTESIAN BELT, of deeper strata, extends practically from the east to the west boundaries of the dry territory. Twenty artesian wells, having large concrete storage tanks, furnish water piped to every forty acres for domestic purposes on the forty-seven thousand acre project mentioned in a previous paragraph.

One of the big money crops in the non-irrigated country is early Bermuda onions—the very earliest in the United States. Every year the Willacy county grower races his South Africa neighbor to reach the New York market first. It is a nip and



tuck affair, highly thrilling to the competitors. The Willacy County onion is first in quality. It catches the early market and commands a premium price, as a rule. Many a farm in years past has been paid for with one season's crop in that section—when land values were not as high as they are now.

The earliest watermelons in the world are shipped from the non-irrigated country. Thousands of acres of watermelons are planted each season, patches containing as much as a thousand acres—bordering on the "sand belt."

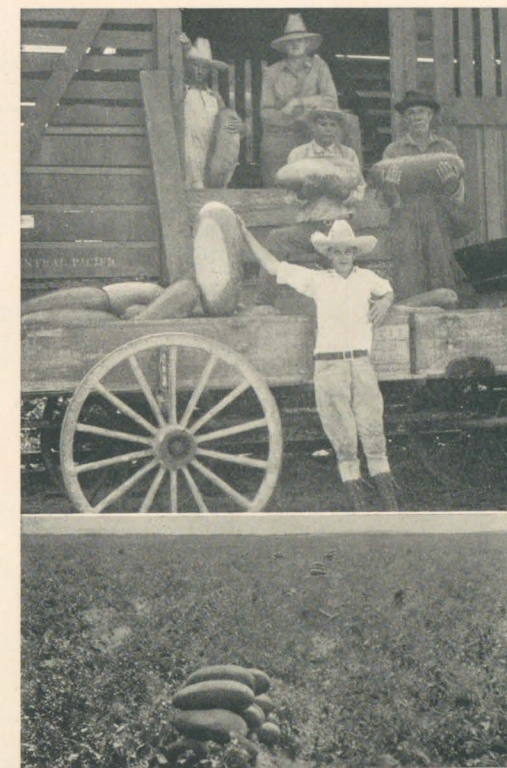
A Plant Farm of two hundred acres, one of the largest known, has been operated near Raymondville for several years. The unique feature of this farm is that all plants are field grown, not a hot-house on the place. As a result, the plants are hardier than those grown under cover. They are also the very earliest plants on the market. Millions of them are shipped each season, in car lots, and by parcels post, to every state in the Union. The varieties are: Bermuda onions, "frost-proof cabbage plants," egg-plant, tomatoes, cauliflower, and kohlrabi plants. It is probable that the remarkable success of the Plant Farm is responsible for the recent venture of dry-land growers in truck farming. Beginning with 1925,



Clearing the brush on a 50,000 tract in The Valley.



Photo made exactly a year from date of planting this eight acre vineyard, at Lasara—May 1. In July following the owner shipped quantities of grapes to market by express, and supplied many local people, also.



One of the rows of watermelons shown in the picture filled a car for early shipment from Rachal, on the Southern Pacific. The other picture shows loading the melons which averaged from forty to sixty pounds.

potatoes, beans, tomatoes, English peas, and cabbage were among the vegetables successfully grown without irrigation.

While farming without irrigation has its hazards, it also has its compensations. The law of averages is protective enough to underwrite success if it is founded upon good courage and a willingness to meet an off season with a smile.

The dry-land farmer believes he has a smile coming over immunity from water taxes and rentals. He hustles his crops up to earliest maturity hoping to make the record of the first on the market. His secret of achievement lies in conserving all natural moisture by cultivation—cultivation early and often. The net results demonstrate the wisdom of such methods.

The non-irrigated districts of the Valley are attracting large capital at this time.





*Cream checks save many Valley farmers from red lines on the ledger. No better country in the world for dairying than the Valley.*

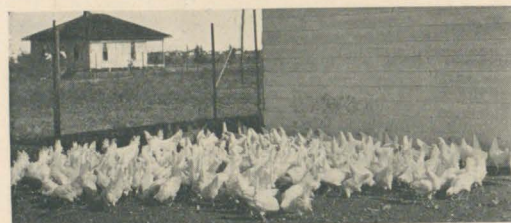
**LIVE-STOCK, DAIRYING, POULTRY, BEES  
HAVE EVERY NATURAL  
ADVANTAGE**

ACCORDING to the best authorities, the Valley provides ideal natural advantages for the raising of cattle, horses, mules, hogs, goats, chickens, turkeys, and other animals and fowl.

The total number of acres in pasture in the four Valley counties is three hundred and sixty-seven thousand, eight hundred and eighty-five. There are ten thousand and fifty horses, eighteen thousand and four mules, forty thousand cattle, eighteen thousand seven hundred and sixty of which are dairy cows, five thousand five hundred and ninety-nine hogs. These are govern-



*Hogs find the Valley a health resort.*



*There are more than three thousand of these beauties—just ten months old, but they flew right and left when they heard the click of the photographer's machine.*

ment figures. Heaven only knows how many goats supply the largely increasing demand for enchilados (an Aztec delicacy); burros, beyond reckoning. Cat and dog life is multifarious and cheerful, both pedigreed and other kinds. Every Aztec owns and operates catteries and kennels, judging by visible manifestations.

Dairying is one of the Valley's best promises. There are a number of creameries, one a branch of a nationally advertised concern. The present demand for butter fat and milk far exceeds the supply, and the prices are excellent. The daily cream check keeps many a Valley farmer on the happy side of the bank ledger.

Poultry raising is becoming more popular every year. The usual home and local market supply prevails, and several large poultry concerns ship eggs in car lots. Their ranches are usually stocked with thousands of white leghorns.

Chickens, cows, and pigs are exactly the right combination to fit with a citrus ranche. Feed crops for them grow quickly and continuously. Bees also belong. Every blossoming bush, vine and tree furnishes aromatic flavor to the best waffle-honey in the world.

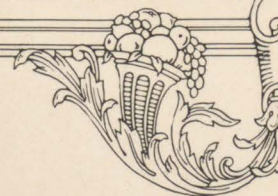


*Bees belong to every citrus grove.*

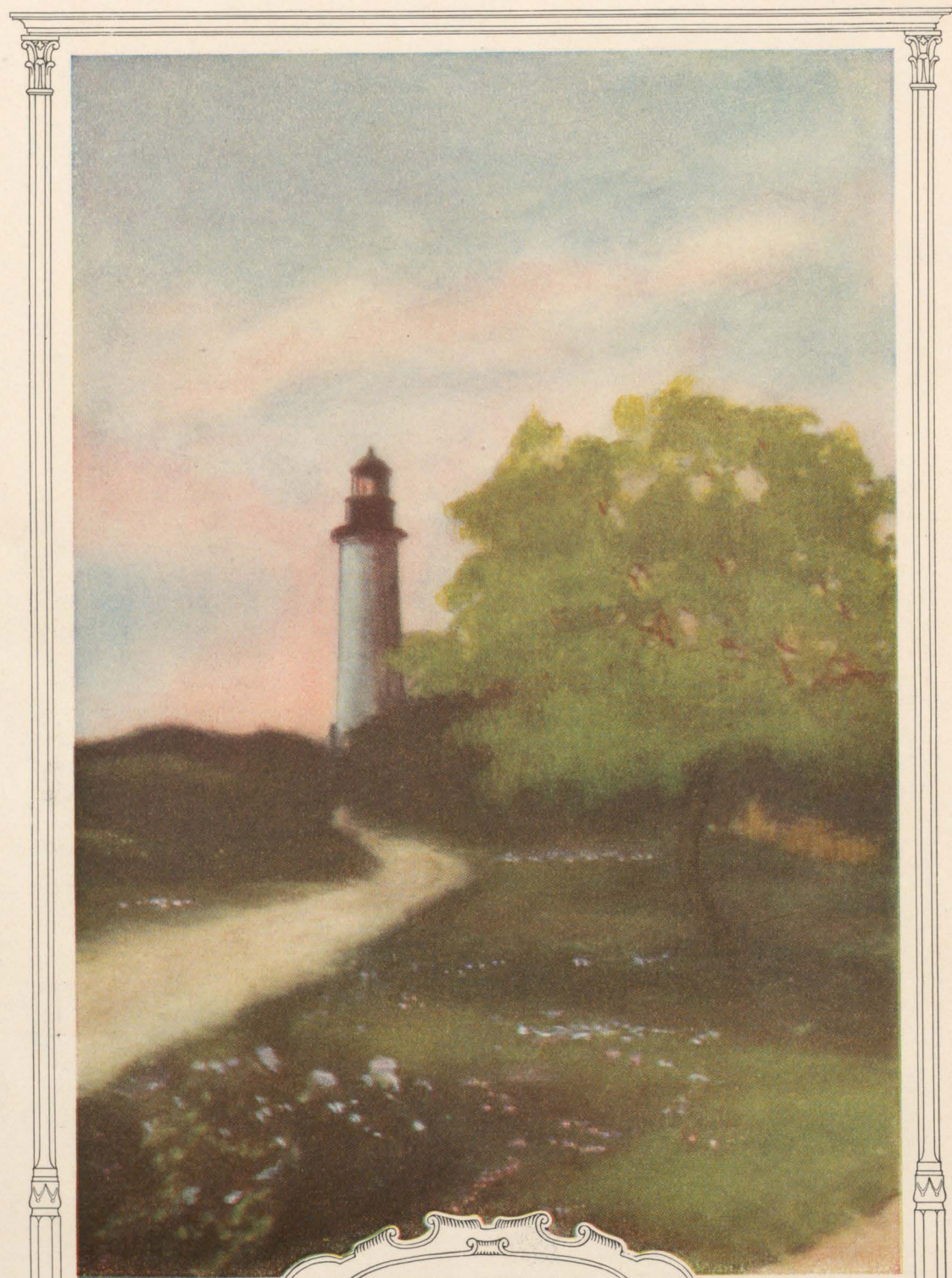
And this Raymondville lassie calls your attention to the fact that her grapefruit trees flourish and fruit in the non-irrigated area which is newly planting thousands of acres to citrus trees.



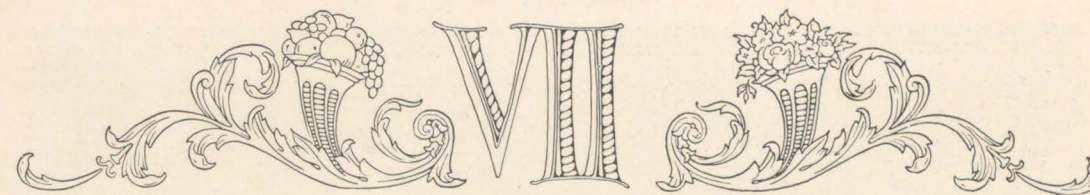
*Breakfast  
grows on trees in the  
Valley*







Among historic landmarks is the old lighthouse at Point Isabel



## THE PORT OF BRAZOS DE SANTIAGO AT (PORT) POINT ISABEL

YEARS and years ago, Brazos de Santiago was a port of no mean importance. Its interesting history is a part of the Valley's own, and would fill many pages of this book. It flourished as a port while Point Isabel flourished as a summer resort.

In those days, the Morgan Line, a SOUTHERN PACIFIC subsidiary, operated between New York and Point Isabel—furnishing passenger as well as freight service.

According to Pierce's history, the Port always had from nine to twelve feet of depth. Until the Rio Grande Railroad (narrow gauge) was completed in 1872 from Brownsville to Point Isabel, "fast freight" wagon teams hauled all shipments from the port to Brownsville and Northern Mexico. The same history states that Mexico granted a permit in 1828 for the operation of boats on the Rio Grande.

In 1848, the United States, at the instigation of General Taylor, purchased a fleet of river boats which were extensively used between the mouth of the Rio Grande and Fort Ringgold (Rio Grande City), and as far as Roma, during early Government activities on the Border. One fourth-class war ship, the U. S. S. Rio Bravo, got as far up stream as Santa Maria, blew up a boiler, and drifted back to Brownsville on the crest of a flood-stage river, and sank to

rest for all time against the western boundary of Fort Brown's river-bank.

Quoting still further from Pierce's history, the Gulf of Mexico off Brazos de Santiago and the mouth of the river "was constantly speckled with large and small steamships from all points of the globe" and it was a usual thing to see from thirty to forty large steamships a month anchored there. And that from 1861-67, very frequently "more than two hundred vessels were off the river's mouth."

The coming of the railroad into the Valley, in 1904, cut boat traffic down to two light-draught vessels, the Manteo, and the Luzon. The Luzon was purposely sunk in the channel, obstructing further use of the port, so the story goes.

But the year 1927 saw the completion of a sixteen-foot channel and jetties at Brazos de Santiago, Point Isabel. Individuals and the Valley as a whole worked valiantly for years to secure the reopening of the harbor. The Rio Grande Railroad was standardized as part of the Government's requirement in appropriating initial funds for harbor development. The combined Valley and Government fund was \$250,000, which proved not nearly enough to finish the inner harbor.

Hope dimmed and courage faltered. But

← Built in 1853, the lofty light protected the harbor until recent years. Now there is a new one in the pass. New owners of Point Isabel have bought the tower from the Government. They have also re-named the town Port Isabel. In the course of modern street making the lovely trees have been removed.



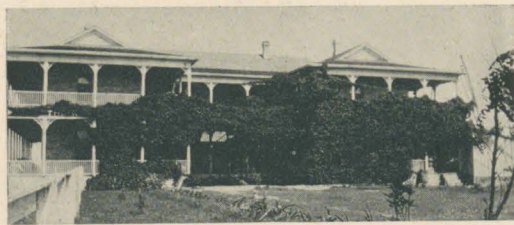


The United States Government has built jetties at Point Isabel and is in charge of harbor work there. A sixteen foot channel is already dredged, and the Valley expects to get a thirty foot channel by creating a navigation district, and through Government aid.

in 1925, the Government, in the Rivers and Harbors bill, authorized the port survey, and allotted the funds necessary to complete a sixteen-foot channel and jetties. The jetties will modify the difficulty of maintaining the channel by constant dredging. Authorities state that the jetties have already produced an additional two feet of channel depth by the continual wash.

Further survey is now being made to determine the feasibility of deepening the channel to twenty-five or thirty feet. The Government has indicated a willingness to develop the channel to meet the Valley's necessity. The approximate amount now expended on the project is from eight to nine hundred thousand dollars.

In May, 1927, the active building of Point Isabel as a great pleasure resort be-



Point Isabel's hotel, at one time quaintly called Killarney Inn, but now modernized to Red Arrow.

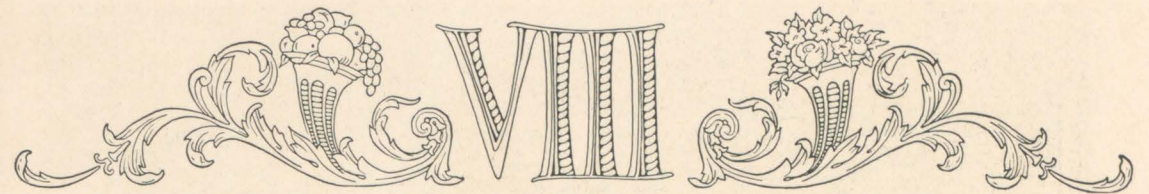


Showing section of the longest Ocean Beach Drive in the world—extending the entire length of Padre Island on the Gulf for more than a hundred and twenty-five miles.



There is marvelous tarpon fishing at both ends of Ocean-Beach Drive. Tarpon Inn shown here is internationally famous, while Point Isabel and Boca Chica are now getting a rival reputation.

gan. Much of the surrounding eight hundred acres included in the proposition is high and fertile, and beautification and recreational possibilities are unlimited. A section of the town will be Venice-like, with canals giving opportunity to drive up to the front or rear dock and park a privately owned yacht or motor boat.



## LITTLE BITS OF VALLEY-WIDE INFORMATION

ON January thirtieth, nineteen twenty-seven, Cameron County voted six million dollars for "feeder roads" to the Valley's Highway, which is hard-surfaced, and extends from Brownsville to the west edge of Hidalgo County. Thence to Rio Grande City and Roma, in Starr County, leads one of the best rolled graded gravel roads in Texas, the entire distance of connected Highway being about a hundred and twenty-five miles.

The big bond issue for tributary roads carried overwhelmingly. The farmers did it themselves, thereby showing their faith in the Valley's future. It was the largest sum on record ever voted by a single county for good roads.

Hidalgo County, by forming road districts and voting millions of dollars for rural roads expects to equal or exceed Cameron County's great issue of bonds. And Willacy, virtually a brand-new county, has carried a bond issue to hard surface a road to cross the county north to the Kenedy County line.

From Pharr north, through Edinburg, lies the finest stretch of Valley hard surface road extending to the county line. Brooks County is building its connecting good road from there to Falfurrias. This gives a continuous hard surface road from the Valley to Corpus Christi, thence to San Antonio and other Texas points.

The road program outlined for immediate construction assures Valley farmers of easy access to shipping facilities. It

will promote greater prosperity than any other one thing.

Street paving is the Valley vogue. Upon the completion of the Highway, every little town tasted the luxury of paved roads, and presto! even the smallest towns now boast of paved streets, some of them concrete from curb to curb. It is one of the things that amaze the visitor, and it shows the substantial foundation upon which development is proceeding.

At the beginning of colonization here, every land man had his own tract to sell. Each one laid out a town by the side of the railroad to serve his own settlers: hence, the string of Valley towns so close together, all in a row. The Highway connecting them has become *Main Street*.

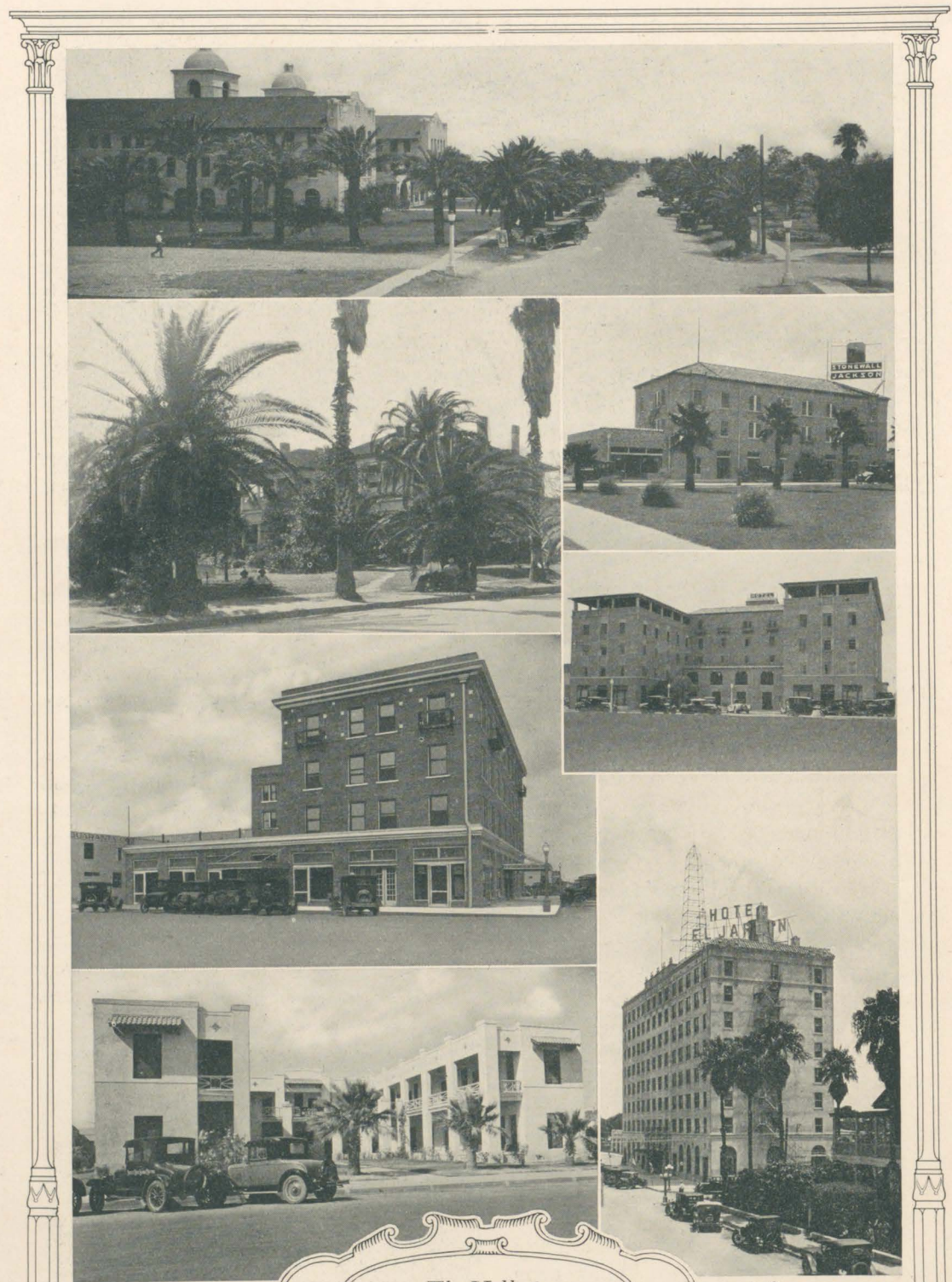
### TOWNS SPRING UP LIKE MAGIC ALONG THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC'S VALLEY LINES

SINCE the beginning of the story—some months ago—the map of Valley towns has

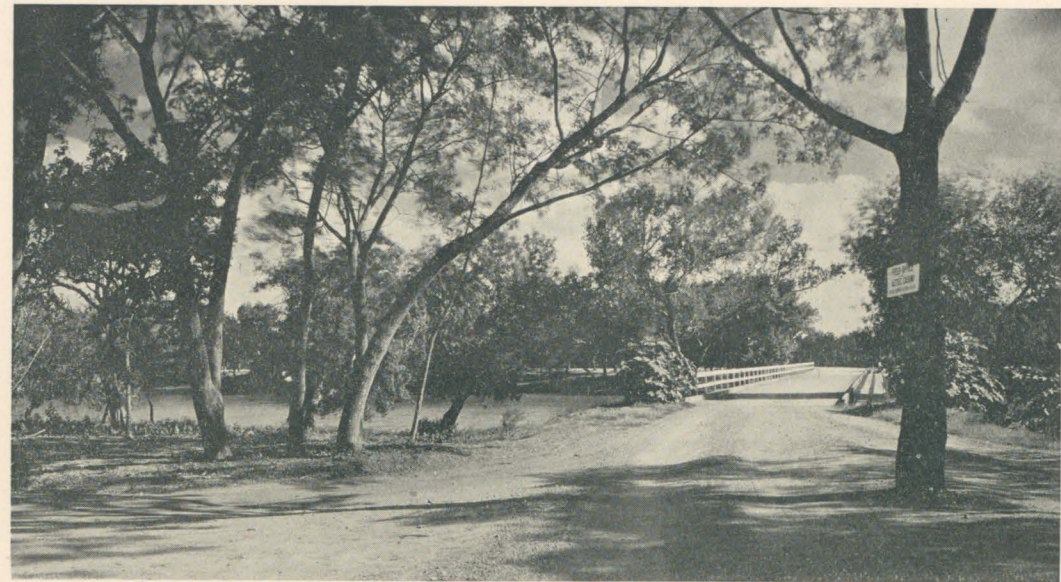


Over the hills to the sunset end of the Valley, Rio Grande City, and Roma, of the hill country.





*The Valley's  
Hotel Facilities are rapidly  
increasing*



*Some people will tell you that trees—real ones—are scarce in the Valley. See for yourself the beauty of native trees and resaca with a shady drive through the town of Olmito.*

changed so materially that one has to study his Valley geography anew.

True to Valley form, the new towns are growing by leaps and bounds; and these so lately created communities are destined to progress in even a more rapid ratio than the original group of villages because of the fact that the Valley has become so widely and favorably known in the past few years and many new-comers will choose pot-luck in new and promising locations.

In the discussion of new and additional Highways under the recent and prospective bond issues for roads, a hard surface road following the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINE from Edinburg to Harlingen is mentioned as desirable, feasible, and assured. This will prove one of the most needed road connections, and will give the new SOUTHERN PACIFIC towns a running start towards their day of fulfillment, besides shortening the distance between two of the Valley's most important cities by many miles.

Citing the rapid growth of one of the new towns—Edcouch—which was actually launched in February, 1927, the amazing record of one hundred and seventy-five

members of its Chamber of Commerce by the first of September following will convey the fact of the inevitable large development created over the wide, rich stretch of territory traversed by the SOUTHERN PACIFIC's Valley line.

The four largest Valley truck farms are located in this territory. They are owned by big metropolitan concerns and operated by them to supply their own markets. They ship hundreds of cars of fancy mixed vegetables to New York and other eastern markets. The SOUTHERN PACIFIC is providing every shipping facility to handle their constantly increasing tonnage. The establishment of local Pacific Fruit Express service through the icing plant at Edinburg, with re-icing facilities all along



*Birdseye view of Brownsville, "the Mother of the Valley."*





There are miles and miles of Highway in the Valley like the one shown here.



Hidalgo County court house at Edinburg.

the line, gives Valley shippers super-service, and guarantees the quickest and safest possible distribution to perishable products.

The record-breaking track laying of the extension from Harlingen to Brownsville inaugurated unbroken SOUTHERN PACIFIC

service to its Valley terminal—before this book was in circulation. Immediately following the completion of this thirty miles of new track through one of the Valley's finest sections, new townsites have been platted, new communities created, which will immeasurably enrich the Valley's present treasure-string of thriving cities and townlets.

The combined motive power which is speeding up *The Spirit of the Valley* to its super-development is furnished by its various Valley-wide organizations.

Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Shrine Club, Masons, American Legion, Elks, Woodmen, Knights of Pythias, Boy Scout, Knights of Columbus, Valley Federation of Wom-



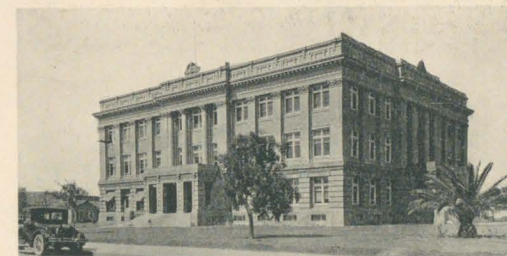
McAllen's busy thoroughfare at mid-day.



A peaceful scene in "Mission, the home of the grapefruit."

en's Clubs, Y.W.C.A., Girl Reserve, Federated Music Clubs, Historical and Old Landmark Association, Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Little Theatre, Oratorio, Parent-Teacher, Valley Medical Society, Texas Citrus Fruit Growers Exchange, Valley Nurserymen's Association, Rio Grande Valley Citrus Exchange, Horticultural Society, Rio Grande Potato and Asparagus Growers Associations, Rio Grande Valley Growers Association, Water Users, Engineers, Valley Press Association, Commercial Secretaries, Automobile Association, Yacht Club, Polo and Baseball, Church Federations (all denominations), and many other affiliated bodies are lending enchantment to the Valley's golden future.

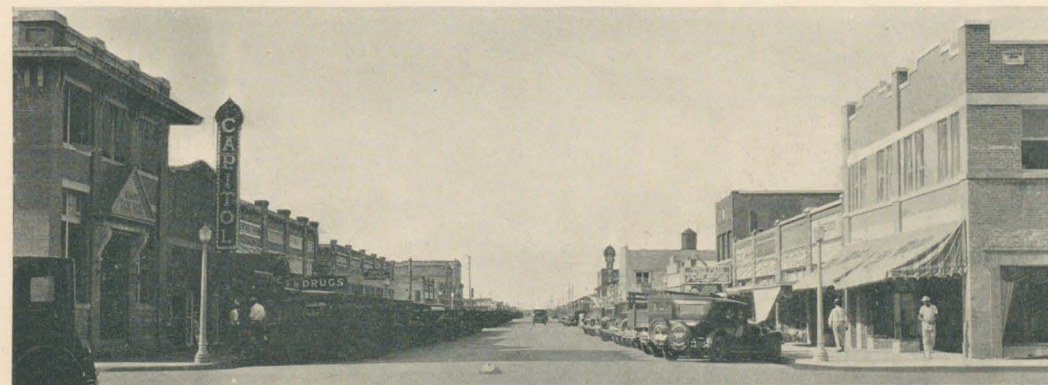
the stir and activity under the stars and stripes to the Mexico side of the river is equivalent to traveling thousands of miles to reach a perfectly strange foreign country.



Cameron County court house, at Brownsville.

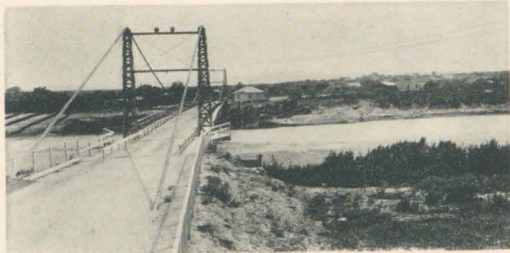
#### ACROSS THE RIVER

THE Rio Grande is a "joy" stream at the Valley end of its course. To step from



How does this look for a six-year-old Valley town? It is Weslaco, with fine paved streets, modern lighting system and traffic regulations, and everything you will find in cities many years older and much larger.





Ancient Reynosa, "across the river" from Hidalgo. Here Valley westenders and many tourists flock for refreshments.

Quaint "Heroic Matamoros" and old Reynosa! Roma, and "the men of Mier!" Towns more than a century old, and many of the original buildings still in use!

At one time Matamoros had a population of forty thousand, and was one of the most important cities of Mexico. Space will not permit the story of its long years of strife and decline to a few thousand souls, but:

"A dinner across the river" is the most favorite feature of entertainment of all Valley guests, whether individuals, or conventions, or just home-folks.



Before the Civil War, Lieutenant Robert E. Lee was stationed at Ft. Ringgold, and the house in the picture was his headquarters. As everybody knows he afterwards became the well beloved General Lee honored by both north and south.



"We have just married, and are off on our honey-moon," actually.

It is only fair to state that the excellent food found in certain of the well known places is excuse enough to go over, and probably more total abstainers enjoy it than those who wash it down.

The novelty of mailing a few post cards "from abroad" and feeling law-loose holds a charm for any stranger.



One of the oldest Border buildings, at Hidalgo, former county seat of the county bearing its name, typical of earliest settlement.



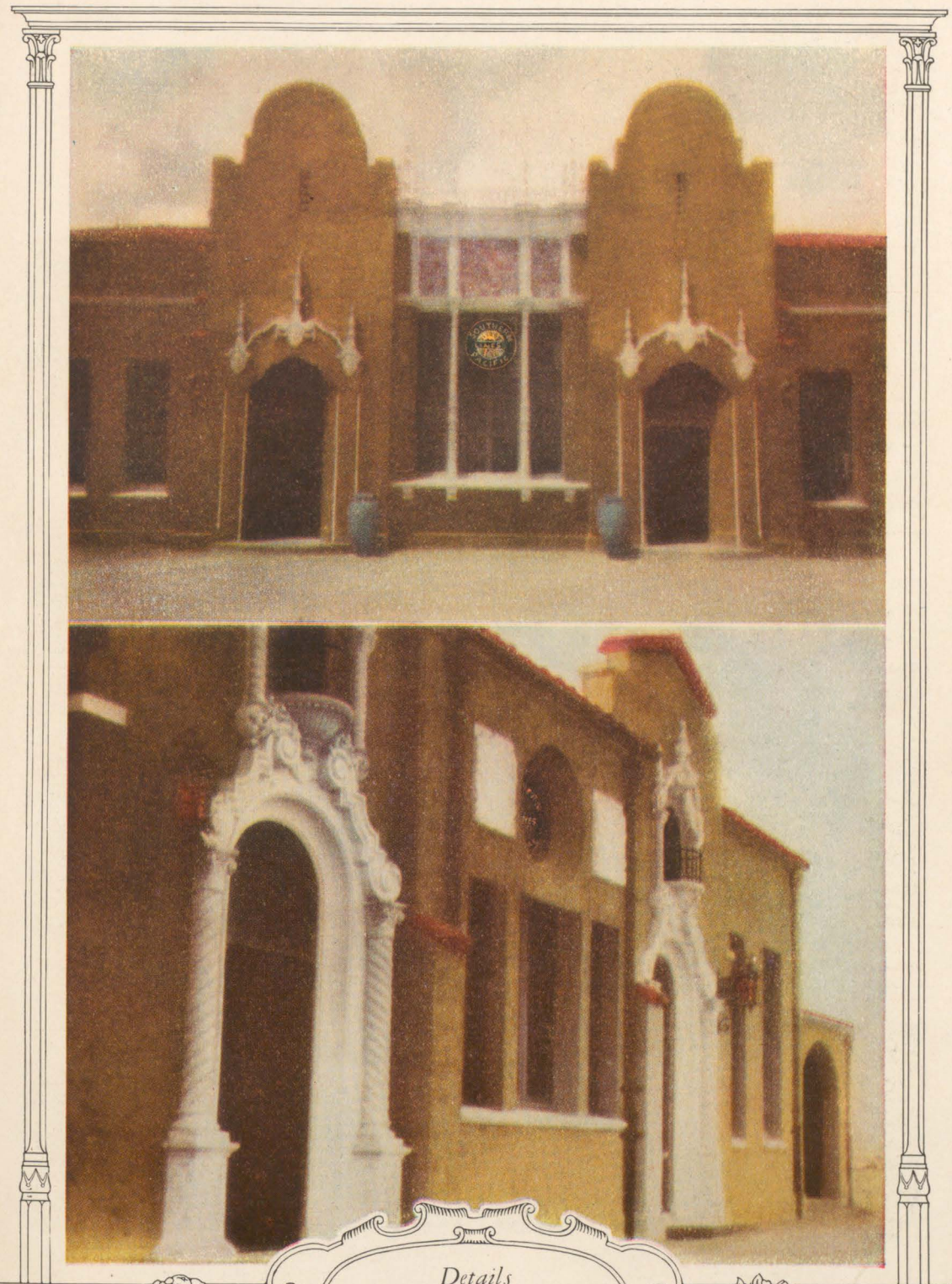
Llano Grande golf links serve Mercedes, Weslaco, and adjacent territory. The grounds are exceptionally beautiful, and golfers from all over the Valley meet there.



Sector of a typical Mexican jacal village down on Rabb's plantation below Brownsville. The thatch roofs are made of palms from the famous palm grove across the resaca.

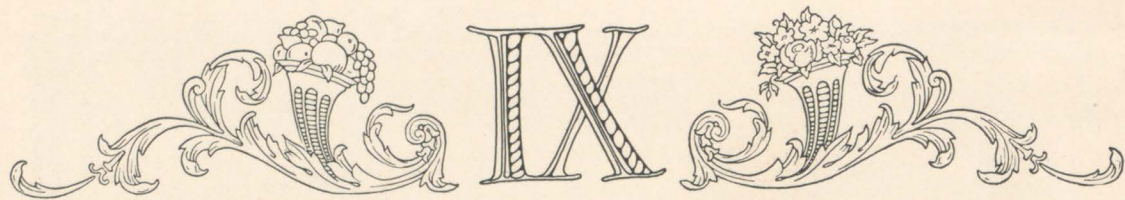


Valley towns now have modern fire stations and equipment. This one is at Harlingen.



Details of Southern Pacific stations at Edinburg and McAllen





“OPPORTUNITY” WRITTEN IN SHINING LETTERS  
ALL OVER THE PLACE

THERE is much to be done in the Valley, and for it. It is time all hands were at it.

The most needed thing is CAPITAL—large means and world-wide advertising such as built California and Florida from small beginnings.

*They are coming, men of means and vision*—one at a time, enticed, coerced by friends, or just plain curiosity-bound, to glimpse a place that kept the nation awake to see how far the SOUTHERN PACIFIC would get before the Interstate Commerce Commission with its Rio Grande Valley program.

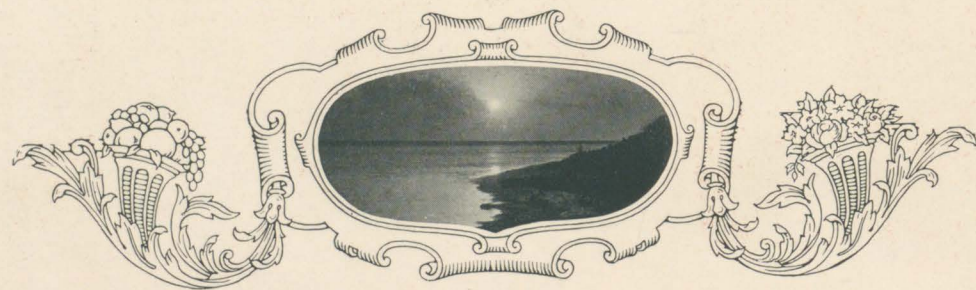
Men who control millions, even billions, for investment, have visited the Valley recently for the first time. Wisdom plants investments where growing conditions are best. The Valley offers a golden, fertile field. Let the rich man escape it, IF HE CAN.

Cotton mills, canning factories, distributing branches of large supply concerns of every denomination, to serve the popula-

tion on both sides of the Rio Grande are some of the needs of the hour. A foundation for such development is already laid in the Valley's great public utilities. Whatever the demand, there is assurance of fulfillment in the continuously added units of power, light, refrigeration, water and natural gas for many uses.

There are oil and gas fields near enough to have justified a recent Valley-wide gas franchise of tremendous possibilities. It is even so that every one of the four Valley counties is found to have salt domes. Many of the big oil companies have leases. Just when they will be exploited is problematic; rumor says, soon.

With the fundamentals of good life provided, the Valley opens new vistas through the coming of its great and splendid channel, the SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES, and through its other limitless potentialities. It offers its treasures to the world—treasures—“*greater than the most vivid imagination can portray.*” (W. R. Scott)



—64—

J. C. ENGELMAN, INC.  
Rio Grande Valley Texas Lands  
Sales Office; 1228 Arcade Bldg.  
ST. LOUIS, MO.

THIS BOOKLET WAS ISSUED BY

C. S. FAY,  
Traffic Manager

SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINES  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

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