



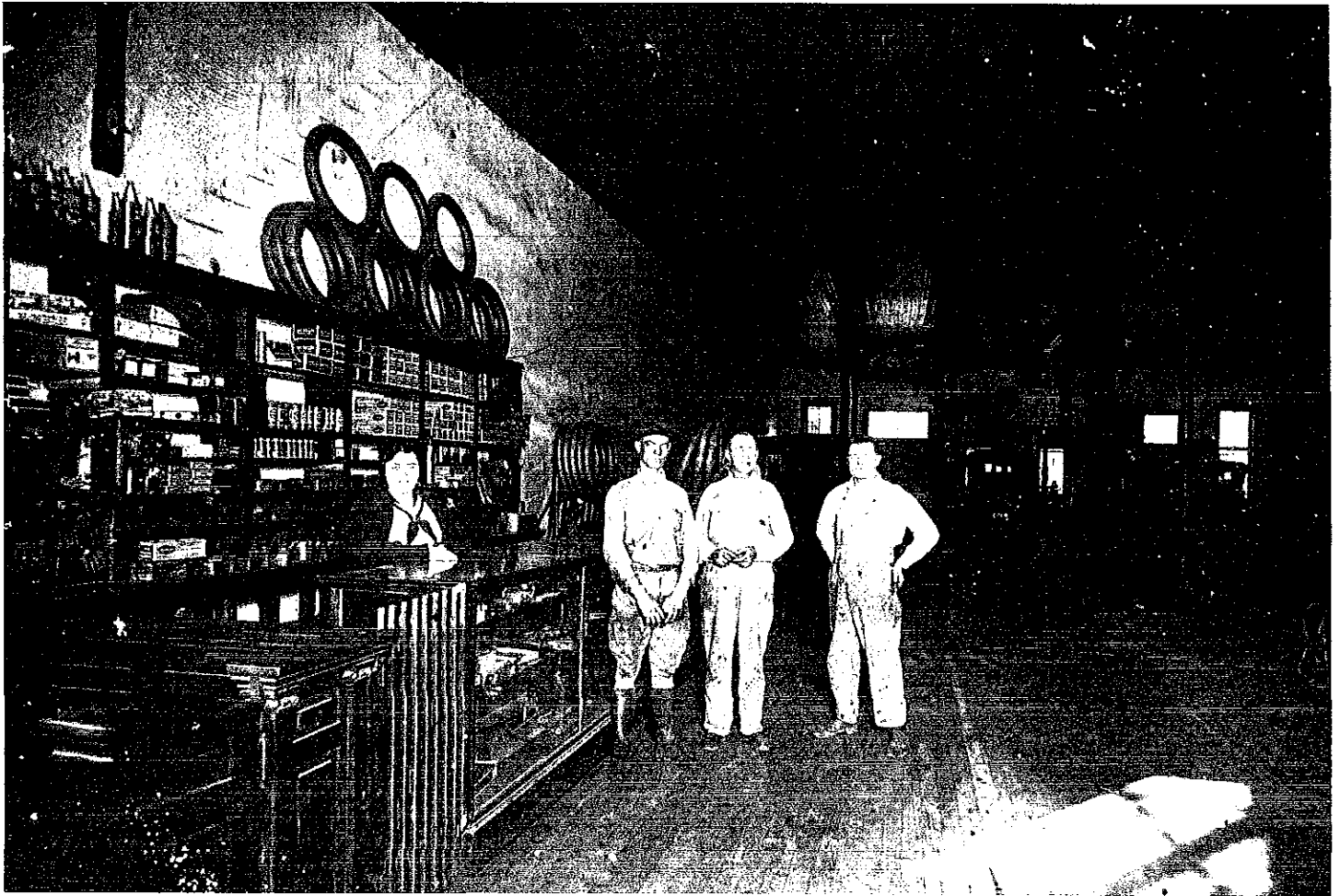
The Rivers Bros. Mercantile Co. Buildings

Description: Shows the two large buildings that made up the Rivers Bros. establishment on Southside.

Photo Date: after 1907

Notes: The building on the left was the Grocery, Vehicle and Implement Department; the other was the Dry Goods Department. They were located on South Main Street just south of the Elgin Bank. Whitten's note: "Front building burned, 1942."

Credit: From the Elgin Historical Association.



McCreery's Garage, Elgin

Description: Interior of a large auto workshop with a counter on one side, one woman attendant and three men.

Photo Date:

People: Beatrice Huey, B. Aubry, R. W. McCreery, and Emmitt Wade.

Notes: This garage was located on Southside.

Credit: From the Elgin Historical Association.

110 South Main Street - Rivers Building
some notes for Texas Fiber Mill
by Ann Helgeson, Elgin Depot Museum

The Rivers Building was constructed in 1906 by J C Miller, Sr., who built many other major buildings in town at this time.¹ The Rivers family was an early Elgin family with business interests as varied as groceries, dry goods, banking, vehicles, farming and farm equipment and cotton brokering. Their beautiful family home, still occupied by members of the Rivers family, is on Upper Elgin River Road a couple of miles down Central Avenue from Main Street. The building housed the grocery, vehicle and implement departments of the Rivers' enterprises.. There was another nearly identical building facing South Main just north of this building in which they sold dry goods and Elgin Bank on the corner of Central Avenue and South Main was also a Rivers enterprise.

In 1931 and possibly as early as 1919² Roger McCreery bought or leased this building and used it for McCreery's Garage. Wallace Arbuckle ran the garage from 1931 before he started his own business across the street in the building which now houses El Maguey restaurant.. There had been another garage, the Owl Garage, in the Rivers Building before 1931³. The building was open on the front and cars could drive into what is now the ground floor. Gas pumps were out in front. The building retained this format until the 1990's. Upstairs the American Legion had their offices for a time.⁴

At other times upstairs was a roller skating rink that was sometimes used for dances. The American Legion met there in the 1920s.

During the Second World War, a time when Camp Swift had 40-50,000 soldiers in training, when it was called the McCreery Building, the second floor was given to the USO for a soldier's Recreation Center. Many dances and parties and receptions were held there and there was a place to read magazines and probably to play cards and/or ping pong. There was a bus station downstairs.

At some point after WWII the building was bought by Charlie Zegub, who used it for his antiques and trading business. There is a funny story about the rows of porcelain toilets that were out front in the entrance to what had been the garage. Long before Elgin became a Main Street

¹ Elgin Courier Nov. 25, 1943 p1 article about the 40th anniversary of Miller furniture. Other buildings by Miller were: the Methodist Church, the Poth House, the now demolished Masonic Hall and half of Granger and Thorndale and many buildings in Smithville and some in Austin.

² Advertisement in Elgin Courier March 20, 1919, p.10 in which McCreery's Garage was said to be "First door south of Rivers Bros."

³ Elgin Courier May 28, 1931.

⁴ Ibid.

Other Courier references to this building, or the "Rivers bldg" not sure if this one: 1-30-19 p2 red cross sewing room 2-6-19 p8 formerly occupied by J F Meeks 3-26-42 McCreery offers his bldg for recreation center for soliers 4-19-45 p1 M L Rivers retires from grocery business (since 1880) Will engage in cotton buying; 12-27-45p1 V L Stephens opens service station in McCreery Bldg; 5-27-43 Rec. center

Photos: Old Collection 1112, 1466, 56, 24, 52, 59, 32 (garage)

City, the ladies of the town thought the toilets were an eyesore and so they "acquired" them from Charlie, who clearly wasn't making much profit from them, and took them to the dump.

The present owner bought the building in the 1990s and made major renovations. Marc Holm, Elgin's mayor, had his decorative tile business on the ground floor for several years in the mid 2000s.

Addendum. Sydna (Davis) Arbuckle says that after the war and maybe during that it was the bus station with a soda fountain ad ice cream that her father used to take her to get.

She agreed with Ronny that there had been a beer joint there, maybe run by Charlie Zegub or maybe Jack Mecey whose wife Charlie married after the Mecey's divorced.

NEW GARAGE IS OPENED MAY 23

5-28-31

FORMER ELGIN BOY IS MANAGER
OF NEW STATION

The R. W. McCreery building on the south side, formerly occupied by the Owl Garage, has recently been remodeled and transformed into one of the most attractive drive-in stations in town. The front wall was torn out and set back several feet, and nice rest rooms were placed at one side. The large space in front, derived from the change of plans, has been cemented and the gas pumps removed to a position near the center, giving a roomy drive way from each direction. A covered wash rack and a hydraulic greasing lift were installed on the lot adjoining, which is also cemented. The entire front is brightly illuminated by a row of green shaded lights. The second floor of the building, occupied by the American Legion, was not affected by the remodeling program.

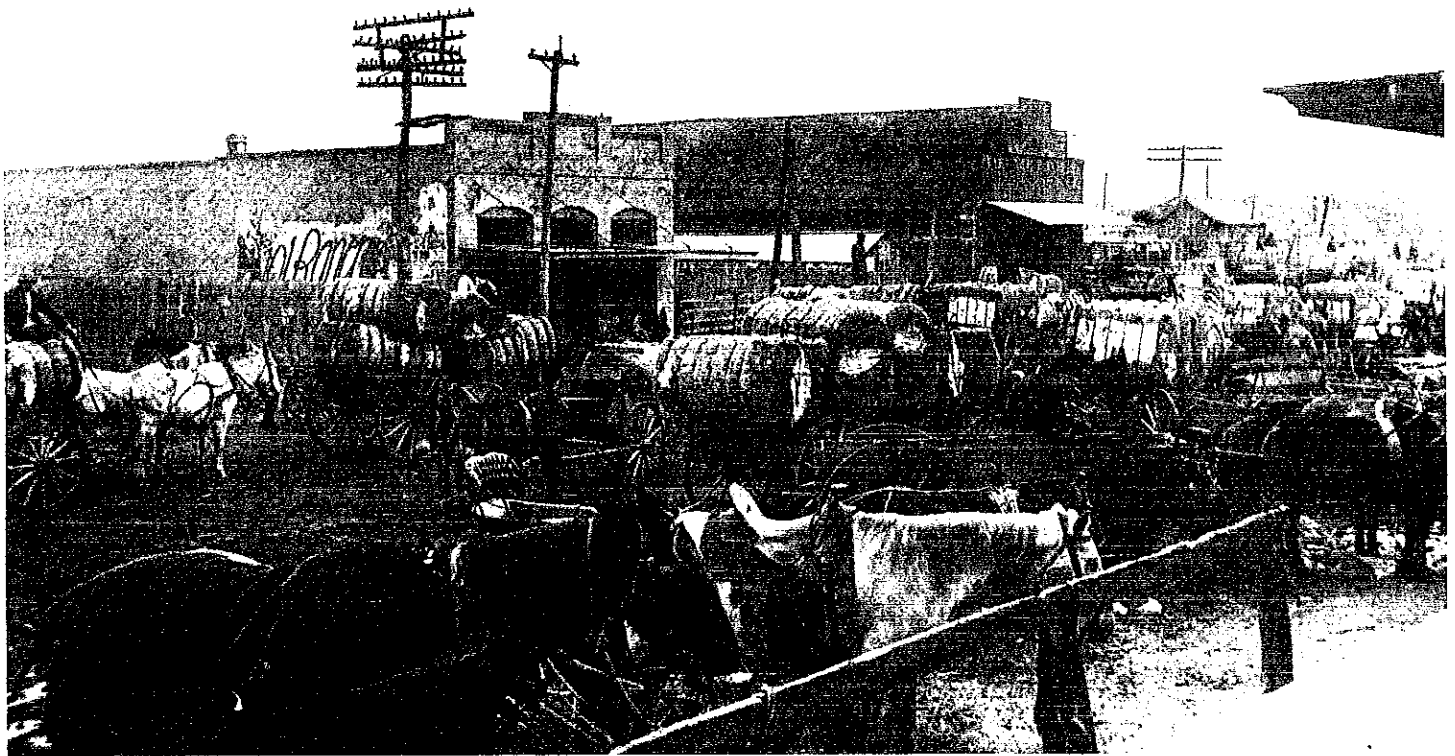
Roger McCreery is a public spirited, progressive citizen and active Klwanian and believes in their motto of "Building". The transformation of his ordinary building into this handsome drive-in station and work shop is a worthwhile movement and is quite an addition to the south side business section.

Wallace Arbuckle, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ott Arbuckle is operating the filling station in the building, holding his formal opening last Saturday. He gave nice souvenirs to all lady visitors that day and the children were treated to ice cold soda water and the men folk were given cigars.

With each purchase of \$1.00 a card was given which entitled the holder to a free grease job any time within thirty days.

A large crowd attended the opening and Mr. Arbuckle enjoyed meeting scores of his old friends.

Another well known Elgin boy connected with this new business is Leo Riding, expert mechanic, who has charge of the mechanical department and maintains an up-to-date work shop, giving guaranteed service on all makes of cars.



A Street Full of Teams and Wagons Loaded with Cotton Bales

Description: An extremely busy street scene, with horses hitched to hitching posts, teams and loaded wagons, and the Steam Laundry in the middle background.

Photo Date: c. 1912

Notes: Note on the back: "Horse belonging to M. L. Rivers in the foreground."

Credit: The Whitten Collection, Elgin Historical Association.