



... . *becomes refined*

Ola Mae Lisle and her son, James A. Jr., feel the cotton as it comes out of one of the first

machines in the refining process.



MRS. OLA MAE LISLE
... runs cotton gin

In Feb. 12, 1927, I found myself robbed of security. We had built a new house in 1926. We had the children we wanted. We had a new business, the Gin (1926). I guess I was happier than I had ever been. We had health and a good living.

In a few hours Buck was gone. He went to the Post Office to mail some letters after supper. I was getting the children to bed.

The Post Office was in the middle of the business block on the north side, where Campbell Insurance is now, and the east side was a taylor shop, owned by Luther Rose. They were working that Saturday night. Buck came out of the Post Office and was shot at the door. He fell out in the street between two cars. Several people were standing on the street. H.B. Yarbrough saw it. He was a few feet away. F.A. Favors ran down the street east. The men came out of the taylor shop and carried Buck in and put him on a table, Doc Rose, Buck Morgan, Henry Townsend, Jess Bell, Carrie Lott and others. Someone came after me. I had never seen them before and I was afraid. At first, I would not leave the children. Several others came and I went with them to town. Someone stayed with the children.

I went in where he was. Dr. M.W. Rogers was working with him. He led me aside and said, "He is bad, not a chance to live. If you can, say what you need to talk about. He is going fast."

Somebody said, "Let's get him home." Men picked him up on a cot and carried him to the house; up the street west, across between where the bank stands now and the fire station, across the railroad and on west to the house. I followed behind them. It had rained for days and was muddy. We were muddy and wet up to our knees. We did not have paved streets then and not any good roads. The men called Dr. Bunkley from Stamford. Mr. C.M. Francis and he tried to get to Rule, but they were about 2 o'clock getting here and he was already unconscious. He never knew they came.

Buck knew everything for about three hours after he

got to the house. He talked to the children and loved them and complained of getting cold. He was shot in front of the left arm. The bullet went down and came out about the top of his hip on the right side. The holes were about $\frac{1}{2}$ inches across. It went through his heart, liver and intestines. He bled to death.

After he did not know me any more, I went out in the back yard and sat on the cellar door. I was numb. I could not talk or cry. I could not pray. My world was a blank. The house was filled with friends, also the yard and the street. They stayed all night and all the next day until the Lisle brothers got here. We had only lived here since August 1921 but everybody liked Jim Lisle.

Mr. Zack Borrow came and took charge when there was no more life, around six o'clock a.m. He lived in the second block north of us about the middle of the block on the east side of the street. He prepared the body, took down a door and layed the body on it in the bathroom. We did not have a bathtub until years later. He put his blood through the comode (at least it was buried at home). The body was always prepared at home in those days. He was layed out on boards, held up by chairs in the east bedroom, where they had taken out the bed and fixed a place. The next day, the whole family was here. The second day we had his funeral at the First Baptist Church. Jim Withrow, a good friend and gin manager at Knox City, sang "In The Garden". It was the first time I had ever heard it. Bro. Alvis preached his funeral. He was helped by a preacher holding a tent meeting, a revival, between the Church and town, over a street east.

Bro. Alvis lived at Roby when the Lisle children were young. He was their pastor and baptized Annie, Elsie, Buck and maybe others, so it was fitting that he could be here. He lived at Haskell at the time, and had helped the Rule church in its early years. We took Buck's body by train from here to Altus, Oklahoma, Chicha, Oklahoma and back to Shamrock, Texas. We stayed all night at Sam Williams' home in Chicha, Oklahoma. Mr. Borrow, Doc Rose, Jim Withrow,

little young birds are left on the high rocks above. The mother bird edges one at a time off the rock and lets it fall through the air and then she flys under it and it lands on her strong wings and she brings it back to the top of the rock. She does so with one after the other until soon each one has been taught to fly. God has always been my eagle and, with His help, I have tried to be a mother eagle to my children.

This was written in 1981. It happened in 1927. The children were; Jean 6, June 4, Helen 2 and James 6 months. I was 25 years old in August. This happened in Feb. 12, 1927.

The city officers, Mr. Henry Townsend and Mr. Kittley, followed Mr. F.A. Favors to the tent meeting. He was sitting on his coat and the gun was in the pocket of the coat. He was taken to Haskell and put in jail. In about two months, there was a trial, lasting about three weeks. He was a one armed man who worked at the oil mill and passed the gin going and coming to work. He had a wife and two grown daughters. They got on the stand, cried and pleaded for them to let him go free. In the end, he got tow years. The family moved to Stamford. The woman worked at the laundry until he was released and they moved to South Texas.

I saw the woman many times, but I never let on that I ever knew them. They were never any worry to me.

Mr. Favors wrote me many letters while he was in the pen, I would let the law read them and then burn them. I never did answer one.

After weeks of agonizing prayer and a struggle with hate, God gave me peace of mind and took the malice and hostile feelings out of my heart for good.

Elsie, Nevada, me and the children. Mance, Courtney and Bob took the cars through, our clothes, bedding and other things. He thought we had to live up there with them, but in tow weeks, I was ready to come home. I knew I had to face my life head on.

The day of the funeral, Mr. Francis had said to me out in the back yard (the only place we could find to talk) that he had made a deal with Buck to buy an interest in the gin and take it over and run it, and that he would like for me to take his place as owner-manager and that he would help me. I told him I would have to think about it and let him know. I made up my mind at Shamrock that I had to try, because I wanted to come home. I did not think I could live anywhere else.

I talked it over with the boys and told them that I thanked them, but I could not be dependent on anyone, and I wanted to come home and that I would make it somehow. So they brought us home.

The next day we washed up everything on a rub board in the back yard, with the big black pot to heat the water and boil the clothes. We washed all the bloody sheets and quilts, cleaned up the house. Mance and Mae and them went home the next day. Mance had sold our milk cow when we had left, so he came back in a few weeks and found us another, a pretty solid black cow. He said that all black cows had good rich milk, but this cow had the sorriest milk. It was so blue y you could see the bottom of the bucket, so I had to trade her off and get another. We never did let him forget about being such a poor judge of milk cows.

When I think about my life, the 32:11 of Deuteronomy in the Bible tells it as it was. "The eagle stirreth up her nest." God took care of me. I have always had a way out. I could manage it someway and always had faith that I could make it with God's help.

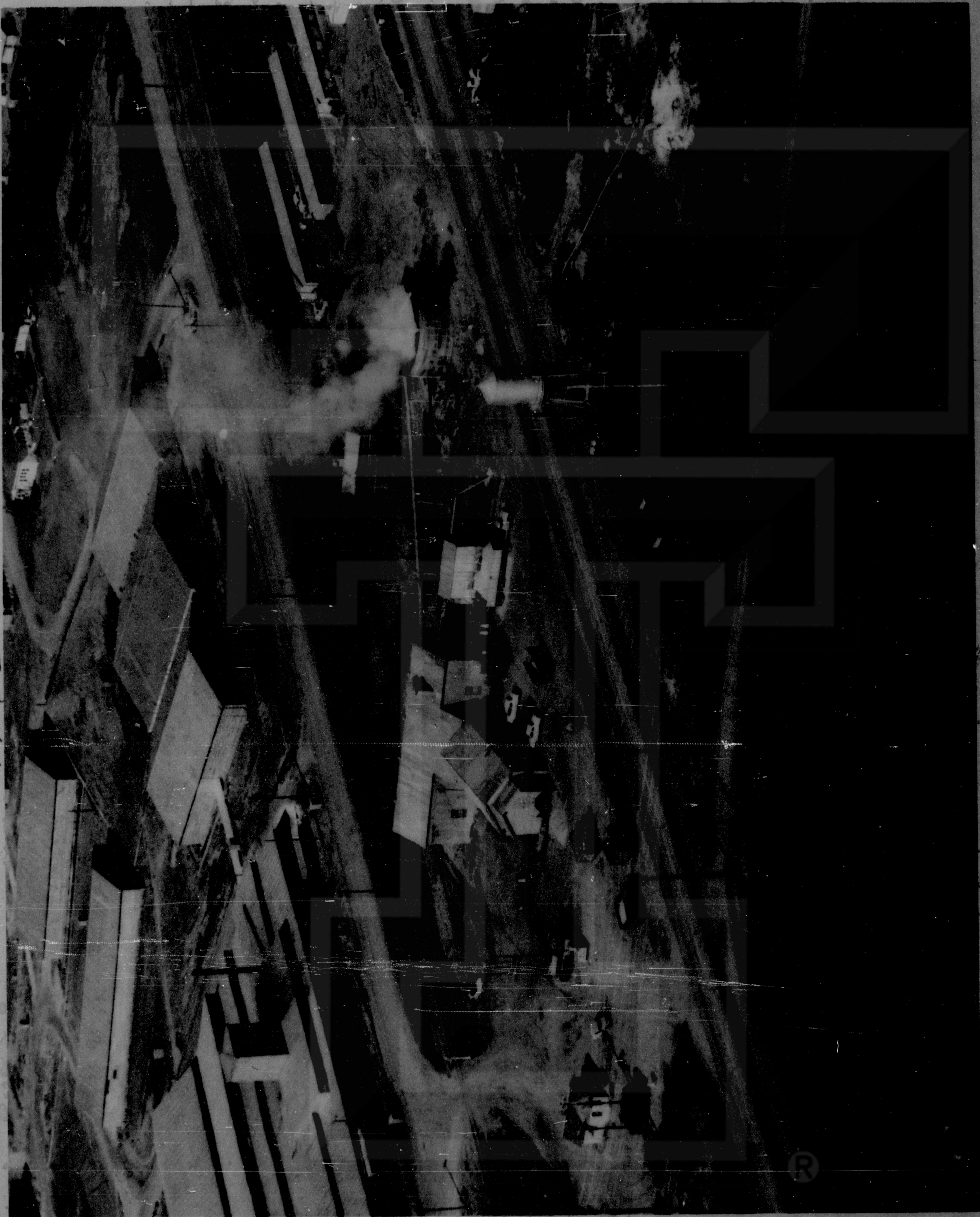
The mother eagle, when her little eagles are ready for the world, she stirreth up the old nest and pushes the old nest over in the canyon below. The

"AND SO YOU'RE A SUPERVISOR"

"As nearly everyone knows, a supervisor has practically nothing to do except to decide what is to be done; to tell somebody to do it; to listen to reasons why it should not be done, why it should be done by someone else, or why it should be done in a different way; to follow up to see if the thing has been done; to discover that it has not; to inquire why; to listen to excuses from the person who should have done it; to follow up again to see if the thing has been done, only to discover that it has been done incorrectly; to point out how it should have been done; to conclude that as long as it has been done, it may as well be left where it is; to wonder if it is not time to get rid of a person who cannot do a thing right; to reflect he probably has a wife and a large family, and that certainly any successor would be just as bad, and maybe worse; to consider how much simpler and better the thing would have been done if one had done it oneself in the first place, to reflect sadly that one could have done it right in 20 minutes, and as things turned out, one has had to spend two days to find out why it has taken three weeks for somebody else to do it wrong."



1963



CHARTER TOUR OF THE MUSEUM
AIR BY "PILGRIM" 10:00 AM

The Story of Rule, Texas

E. J. Cloud

THE HISTORY OF THE LISLE GIN

(Told by Mrs Lisle
in her own words.)

In about 1907 or 1908 there was a gin built on the present site of the Lisle Gin. The gin was built by Swift Gins. Some of the first men who ran the gin were Mr. Swift and his sons, a Mr. Williams, and John Ferguson, who later moved to Jones County.

In 1914 the gin had not been operated for a year or more and it was in poor condition. (Mr. Carl Lee said that Mr. W. A. Earnest had asked him to hire some men and repair the gin and to run it that year. Mr. Earnest had moved here from Munday in 1908 to be partners in the oil mill with Mr. J. L. Jones, who had several gins along with the mill business in adjoining towns.) That year was a good crop year and they ginned all winter.

The next year, 1915, Miss Pearl Earnest was the bookkeeper. In 1916 she married Mr. C. A. Murray, formerly superintendent of our high school.

The driest year has been reported as 1918.

Mr. Spurlock was manager of the gin in 1920. That same year the gin had burned down before they had finished the season.

In 1919 Ola Mae Pike and James A. Lisle were married on September 1, at Memphis, Texas. Jim Lisle had worked at Shamrock and Memphis for Chickasha Gin Company as a bookkeeper for several years before he had gone to the army in World War I. In the spring of 1919, after a period of about three years, he returned. He was given the job of managing the gin at Benjamin, where the Lisles lived for two years, operating the Benjamin and Truscott gins. Both the Benjamin and Truscott gins were Swift Gins.

After the gin burned the Lisles were asked to rebuild it on the same location. In 1921 Mr. Lisle went back and forth each week throughout the summer to work. He stayed with the B. G. Hunts, who ran a boarding house in the west part of town. In 1921 the Lisles chartered two railroad cars and moved to Rule. They bought the house one block west and

one block north of the railroad depot. It was on the southeast corner of the second block where Mrs. Lisles lives at the present time. The house had been built by the Bohanans in 1907 or 1908. Mr. Spurlock had lived there and managed the gin in 1920. It was a well built house made of lumber and painted white.

In the spring of 1926, the Lisles moved across the street and lived, while the old house was torn down and rebuilt. This time it was built of stucco.

Frank McCulley and the Cannon brothers were the contractors and Jess Smith was the cement man. (These men built many Rule homes in the 20's.)

The Gin that the Lisles built in 1921 was an up-to-date gin those days. Six, seventy-sawed Fratt gin stands, a frost steam engine and a large boiler fired with coals and burrs, and burr machine, all made up the new gin.

The gin crew was made up of Mr. Jim Gibbins, the fireman and engineer; Mr. D. P. Fuller the ginner; Dee Cannon, the pressman and a suction feeder, and the bookkeeper. (Many times the farmers suctioned their own cotton from the wagons.)

The gin was managed for 4 years for Chickasha Cotton Oil Company under the name of

Swift Gins. There were good crops and lots of cotton was ginned and in 1925 Mr. Lisles bought an interest in the gin business and the name was changed to Lisle Gin Company. At this time Mr. C. M. Francis was general manager over the oil mills at Rule, Jayton and Stamford and 28 gins. He lived in Stamford and several years later he was killed in a car accident.

It was always a very rushing time at the gin when there was cotton on the yard. (Mr. Fuller said that he can remember one day when he ginned 76 bales in 12 hours and 20 minutes and Dee Cannon tied them by himself.)

Mr. Frank McCulley began working as an engineer in 1924 and worked for 16 years. He later moved to San Antonio where he died in 1965.

The first seed cotton storage house was built for the fall's use in 1923. Cotton was still picked in those days and great quantities of cotton could be stored in a cotton house. This cotton house was divided into

stalls and, if a farmer was in a hurry, he could blow several bales of cotton into one of the stalls. Also he could store 20 or 30 bales of cotton in a stall and gin them out at one time, to catch planting seed this way his seed would stay truer to type. They would gin out of the house when they had caught up, or on rainy days. There was one difficulty with the cotton houses. There was never an easy way to feed the cotton out. When it was time to gin the cotton out of the house, extra hands were needed and it was very hard work. After farmers began to have more and better trailers the cotton house was used less and less, until it was torn down in 1950.

In 1925 extra equipment had been added on until the Frost engine had been overloaded. A Murray Corles steam engine was put in and it ran so easy and light that there was no load when more machinery was added years later.

At this time the gin building was built of lumber and painted yellow.

On Thanksgiving Day of 1926 the worst sandstorm that anyone in Rule has ever seen occurred. (Now 40 years later people are still talking about it.)

The year of 1926 was a big year for crops and they were not through ginning on February 12, 1927, when Mr. Lisle was killed by Mr. Favors who had not lived in Rule very long and was a day laborer at the oil mill.

The men who were working finished that season. Virgil Hunt was the bookkeeper. He had worked several years and he knew a great deal about the business.

Mrs. Lisle took over that fall of 1927. My only experience was some office work at Benjamin Gin the first two years I was married. I had some good men working and they all tried to help me.

My associates in the business were Mr. Sam Williams, a good friend of the family for many years, who lived in Eld City, Oklahoma; Mr. C. M. Francis; the general office force of Rule-Jayton Cotton Oil Company at Stamford (now changed to Stamford Oil Company); Mr. J. L. Pugh, machinery consultant and Mr. R. R. Killoey. A. J. Mills took the place of Mr. C. M. Francis. Mr. Mills and his family lived in Rule before moving to Stamford. All of these men have had encouraging words for my efforts.

The farmers who ginned with me were wonderful, overlooking my mistakes and encouraging me. And I needed it. Having

four small children, I had no other choice than to continue what my husband had started; although at times I felt insufficient. I loved the work from the start and welcomed the long hours and hard work and lots of times, baffling decisions. I went to cotton school in Abilene the summer of 1927, but I felt that I still did not know enough about classing a bale of cotton to buy one. So, I hired Virgil Cassle to buy the cotton that first year. I continued to go to cotton school every summer for several years. The following year I classed and bought all the cotton.

By this time, the gins were buying most all we ginned. For 10 or 12 years we bought on grade and staple. Gins then began buying "hog round," which means paying the same for all grades. This practice was not fair to the farmers or to the buyers. If a farmer takes good care of his cotton and it is a better bale, he is due more money. But cotton was pretty cheap and the cheaper cotton gets the less margin there is between grades. The "hog round" price was changed when the government started to class all samples free for staple and grade for the government loan. The gin cut the samples and mailed them to Abilene along with the grade card to be classed and returned to the farmer. The gin either bought the bale on the card as classed or prepared the loan contract for the farmer to draw his money from the Government Commodity Credit Corporation.

Mr. W. S. Franklin was manager at the oil mill when I first began to sell seed to the Rule mill. After his retirement, Mr. Tom Hornback moved to Rule and was there for several years.

We had some short gin seasons through 1928 and 1929. Some of the men that worked for me in those early years were Noble Glover, A. B. Arnett, Ed Hackfield, C. V. Ashley, G. B. Bishop, Frank Forsythe, Jake Taylor, R. N. Wilson, and Joe Holcomb. In the office were W. E. Baugh, Elsie Kittley, Homer Turner, Faye Yarbrough and Floyd White.

In 1929 cotton prices started rising in the earlier part of the fall. It then went down and stayed down for several years. In 1931 cotton was 5 and 6 cents a pound. In 1932 there was a big crop but no one had any money because cotton was so cheap; In 1933 and 1934 the farmer planted all the cotton he wanted to; 1934 was a very dry year; 1935 was almost a miss; 260 bales were ginned that year.

In 1936 many acres were plowed up. There were fair crops from 1938 through 1941. In 1928 the office was rebuilt and the gin was painted gray. At the same time, the new gin stands, 5 eighty-sawed continental brush gins, 2 new burr machines, a tower dryer with agas burner, and a new steel press were put in. The gin changed from coal for firing to natural gas and they also used burrs.

In 1938 and 1939 the gin changed the way they had handled the cotton bale. For years they had public cotton yards and voted on a public weigher. The farmer hauled his bale after it was ginned to the public cotton yard. (One bale or may be several.) Here it was weighed and the farmer received his weight ticket and his sample. He would then sell his cotton to the gin or as in the 1920's or earlier he sold it to street buyers, bankers, or mercantile stores.

Earnest Hunt was the last elected public weigher in Rule. He was elected in 1936 and weighed through 1938. His cotton yard was north of the Co-op Gin. He was bookkeeper for Lisle Gin from 1939 to 1941 when he had to give up his work because of asthma that was caused from the gin dust.

Handling cotton through cotton yards caused double expense. The buyers had to get the city drayman to help them haul their cotton. The draymen at this time were Luther Rose and Bud Parsons. And the draymen could always get four strong young men from town, who were willing to help in loading the cotton. They could be given an order of 50 to 100 bales to haul. They would load them and take them to the compress. Here they had to be reweighed which was all extra expense to the buyer.

The farmer did not want to take the bonded warehouse man's weights and the buyer would not take the bonded public weigher's weights. This change was a touchy thing for several years. No one seemed to believe that a bale weighed just so much.

It was a big advantage for the buyer to have his cotton carried from the gin to the compress, weighed once, and put in a dry warehouse. Here he could get a bill of lading to ship it as soon as he presented his tickets.

There has not been much change in moving cotton seed and trash around gins. Always when a gin is running steady it can be a rushing job. There have been several haulers through the years but in 1938

Audie Verner contracted this job. Our daughters, Emma Jean Lisle and Jerrene Verner had just gone to Tech to school and everyone needed extra money. Audie recalls that lots of cotton seed was moved with a fork and scoop and, as the gins were moving all the cotton bales to the compress by this time, it made for a full time job. He later hired "Dad" Hager to help out with the hauling and he ran the gin stand. He continued to help until the year 1946.

The custom of hauling around the gin has gone from a wagon and team to truck, and then to big trailer trucks (when the seed had to be trucked out of town to a mill.)

After Audie retired in 1946, James Lisle Jr. returned from the Army from World War II and he has had this job ever since. James had been raised in the gin business all his life and from time to time had helped out in every job from summer repair, office help, and every job inside of the gin house.

1940 and 1941 were short years. George Crawford started ginning in 1940. He had worked about ten years when his health caused his retirement.

Some of the other men working were Jim Holcomb, J.R. Barbee Jr., and T.J. Webb Jr. Those who worked in the office were Ralieg Conner, Shirley Lees, Sam Turner, and June (Lisle) White. My daughter worked for me for 17 years, a very dependable and efficient person. (I do not say this just because she is my daughter.) Emma Jean (Lisle) Cloud and Helen (Lisle Westbrook) Pinkard also worked at different times of the year.

Space will not permit me to name others that were good and faithful workers, but I can truthfully say that I never discharged but one employee in my years of ginning.

In 1940 we put in a longer set of wagon scales. They were all electric and 36 feet long. They were installed on the south side of the office. Before they had been on the north side and were just long enough for a wagon and team. This was all we had needed when the farmers brought in one bale at a time. Now they bring 3 or 4 to a trailer and the pick-up and trailer can be weighed at the same time.

The years of 1943 through 1947 were much better years for the gin.

In 1947 the old wooden building was torn down completely and a new foundation was put down. An all steel build

ing was erected and all new steel machinery was added. The stands were changed from 5 eighty-sawed to 5 ninty sawed. Everything was put on one floor level with the ground. It was an all electric plant. This called for a burner to burn the burrs which was built about 100 feet from the gin. It was always a source of worry when the yard was full of cotton for fear that the wind would blow the fire onto the bales. It came as a relief when the farmers wanted their burrs back on their land.

In 1959 Sam Turner contracted the job of moving the burrs for so much a bale and then back on the land with a charge to the farmer at so much per ton. He bought an all steel chain driven conveyor type truckbed which hauled from 6 to 8 tons per load. The gin put up a 35 bale all steel hooper to blow the burrs in and to load from.

Every year more and more farmers are machine harvesting; therefore, increasing the supply of cotton burrs at the gin. Research and farm demonstration have proved the value of the burrs for maintaining soil productivity and soil condition.

1948 through 1951 were the best years of all the gin years.

In 1949 the first lint cleaners were installed. They were made by Continental and were installed at the back of each gin stand. The lint went through the cleaners before it reached the lint flue on its way to the bale press.

The plains had a big crop in 1948 and 1949. They had not built enough gins to take care of their ginning. Much of the crop was hauled below the cap rock to be ginned. We ginned lots of their crops after we had finished with our own. They hauled it in 12-14 bale loads on stock trailer trucks. Near the end there was a big standstorm on the plains. One day a man brought an eight bale load in and when he drove on the scales the entire thing fell through. The load was jacked out of the pit and they tried to gin one of the bales. It filled all air lines full of sand and after other gins had a try at ginning it, it was run through a combine to remove the sand. It was finally ginned. But, that stopped the plains cotton.

The year of 1952 was very dry. There was no government program in 1952 or 1953. In 1954 the farmers went back to the program.

1949 was the first year the farmers began to contract Mexican bracero labor from Old Mexico to gather the cotton. The first to be brought in were by he Mathis brothers, Scott White, L. W. Jones, Jr. and Adrian Lott.

After they were brought in, the gin put in labor houses over the country as required for camps.

These men would come over under contract with only a small amount of clothing. Their housing, fuel, camping equipment, transportation and their pulling sacks and hoes had to be furnished. The contracts would call for two months to six months with a guaranteed wage of so much for 3/4 of the working hours.

These men were needed badly during the good crop years. Five hundred or more were used through the peak season. And 50 or more were used through the hoeing and pipe-changing season. The price of their wage and, also, the contract price was being raised each year. The number of these men kept cutting down each year until December 31, 1964 when they were not allowed to come over under any condition.

The years 1955 through 1962 were all big runs. Big new trailers were being built more and more every year. These were a big investment only to be used when cotton was being gathered.

The machine harvesting causes gins to be overcrowded and there are't enough trailers when the weather is good and everyone's cotton is ready to gather. When the farmers find it necessary to catch planting seed they line up as many bales of cotton as the amount of seed they wanted. Fifteen to twenty trailer loads of cotton could be filled in one days harvest.

In 1957 the continental lint cleaners were removed, double moss Gordon lint cleaners were installed. One large unit and another tower dryer were added. This improved the samples more than anything that had been tried. Better drying of the cotton before it is ginned improves the turn out and is not as much work on the crew during choke-up and rib fires. The Moss Gordon lint cleaner does a good job of cleaning up lint cotton after it has been separated from the seed. It improves the grade two or three grades.

In 1961 we replaced our lint condenser with a Moss-Gordon consolation. This is a single un

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The plains had a big crop in 1948 and 1949. They had not built enough gins to take care of their ginning. Much of the crop was hauled below the cap rock to be ginned. We ginned lots of their crops after we had finished with our own. They hauled it in 12-14 bale loads on stock trailer trucks. Near the end there was a big standstorm on the plains. One day a man brought an eight bale load in and when he drove on the scales the entire thing fell through. The load was jacked out of the pit and they tried to gin one of the bales. It filled all air lines full of sand and after other gins had a try at ginning it, it was run through a combine to remove the sand. It was finally ginned. But, that stopped the plains cotton.

The year of 1952 was very dry. There was no government program in 1952 or 1953. In 1954 the farmers went back to the program.

1949 was the first year the farmers began to contract Mexican bracero labor from Old Mexico to gather the cotton. The first to be brought in were by the Mathis brothers, Scott White, L. W. Jones, Jr. and Adrian Lott.

After they were brought in, the gin put in labor houses over the country as required for camps.

These men would come over under contract with only a small amount of clothing. Their housing, fuel, camping equipment, transportation and their pulling sacks and hoes had to be furnished. The contracts would call for two months to six months with a guaranteed wage of so much for 3/4 of the working hours.

These men were needed badly during the good crop years. Five hundred or more were used through the peak season. And 50 or more were used through the hoeing and pipe-changing season. The price of their wage and, also, the contract price was being raised each year. The number of these men kept cutting down each year until December 31, 1964 when they were not allowed to come over under any condition.

The years 1955 through 1962 were all big runs. Big new trailers were being built more and more every year. These were a big investment only to be used when cotton was being gathered.

The machine harvesting causes gins to be overcrowded and there aren't enough trailers when the weather is good and everyone's cotton is ready to gather. When the farmers find it necessary to catch planting seed they line up as many bales of cotton as the amount of seed they wanted. Fifteen to twenty trailer loads of cotton could be filled in one days harvest.

In 1957 the continental lint cleaners were removed, double moss Gordon lint cleaners were installed. One large unit and another tower dryer were added. This improved the samples more than anything that had been tried. Better drying of the cotton before it is ginned improves the turn out and is not as much work on the crew during choke-up and rib fires. The Moss Gordon lint cleaner does a good job of cleaning up lint cotton after it has been separated from the seed. It improves the grade two or three grades.

In 1961 we replaced our lint condenser with a Moss-Gordon consolation. This is a single un-