

League of Women Voters of Texas  
1007 West 24th Street  
Austin, Texas

January 1957

TO: Local Current Agenda Chairmen  
FROM: State LCA chairman, Mrs. Harold R. Yeary, Box 534, Laredo, Texas  
RE: New LCA and a report on the old one

You either head the committee to make plans for a proposed LCA for your League or you serve on it, if a separate committee is formed for this purpose. If your work is not already completed I should like to offer some suggestions which would be helpful.

- A. Review your file --
1. Letter and Tool mailed from state office in August 1956.
  2. National Board Report for May 1956. (Example of method for board planning on LCA.)
  3. Program-making material (National publication of September 1955).
- B. Poll your membership for suggestions for LCA for 1957-58.  
Sample: These are my reasons for choosing this item:  
I foresee the following emphasis, scope, type of action for this item:  
Additional comments:  
Name:

- C. Review your local continuing responsibilities. *The Health study will be continued as a continuing responsibility.*
- D. If you have already done B above, explain the item proposed by the board to the general membership via your local VOTER, one month prior to your annual meeting. *this was done*

- E. As soon as your board has proposed the new LCA, a large committee should get to work preparing an Outlook for Work on the proposed item, to use in your explanation to the membership and so that there will be no year-end lag in local activities -- you'll be ready to start immediately after your annual meeting. *I will not be LCA Chairman next year - a study and survey of Cameron Co. will be the LCA for next year -*

Now for my report to the state board I'll need a report from you. Will you let me know if these suggestions have been helpful, and will you cut off the bottom of this page and mail to me with your replies? Thanks very much!

League Harlingen Mrs. J. M. Evans LCA Chairman

If yours was an action item in 1955-56, did you achieve your goal? yes  
If answer to above was no, why in your opinion was goal not reached?  
(1) Bad timing (2) Not enough local interest (3) Other

How did you inform your membership? Units ✓ VOTER ✓ General meeting ✓

How many members did you use on your committee? 4 members + 7 to 10 Citizens interested  
Was your portfolio directly responsible for getting new members or reactivating old members? I believe so -  
*actively in developing public opinion and cooperation of the City Commission - This group was appointed by the larger group referred to as a Committee*

From Martha Evans L.C.A. Chairman —

Called together and

through the efforts of a Community group sponsored by the League to study the need of improvement of Health and Sanitation ordinances of the City. This group was composed of representatives of all the larger organizations in the City such as J.C. - H.F.W.C. - B. & P.W. P.T.A. and many others. The L.C.A. Chairman (Martha Evans) was Co-Chairman with Mr. Gene McCullough a former mayor and practicing Atty in Harlingen. We were successful in interesting the City Manager and Sanitarian who were added to the steering Committee. Also the director of the Harlingen State I.B. Hospital - The Executive Sec. of the I.B. Assoc. who is a former Pres. and of the I.W.O. - The Coordinator of Volunteer Services of the I.B. Hospital who is a League member - A local Pediatrician and 2 other physicians - through the coordinated efforts plans were worked out <sup>plans</sup> for a Health Commission composed of three of the leading physicians of the City to fill the place of a City Health Officer, a position that had not been filled for a number of years. The City Commission recently accepted the recommendation of this Committee that the Health Card requirements be amended to require a negative Chest X-ray before securing a Health Card for work. This revision of the Health Card requirements was passed as an emergency measure in time to let employed workers requiring health cards to take advantage of the I.B. Mobile X-ray. The L.C.A. Chairman and Mr. McCullough appeared before the City Commission and spoke for this revision giving factual testimony for the great need of the Chest X-ray as this Co. is in the top bracket of all Counties in the U.S. in the incident of I.B. Plans are now underway to develop facilities for x-ray for workers at a price that the employees can meet. With the end of this League year we will not continue sponsorship of this Committee as the major portion of our aims have been attained. We have received many compliments from many sources for the League effort of the past 2 years.



HARLINGEN

League of Women Voters

Annual Report

of

Officers & Directors

1958 ~ 1959

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

It has been a pleasure to serve the Harlingen League of Women Voters as President during the year 1958-1959. It has been a satisfying and fruitful year.

At the Board meeting which followed the annual meeting, portfolios were distributed and the new Board organized. Undoubtedly, our greatest handicap, this year, has been an inadequate Board without all portfolios filled. Three Board members resigned during the year, Mrs. Dunn an elected member and Mrs. Fanning and Mrs. Huffman, appointed members. As a consequence, the Board operated at minimum capacity and with many necessary portfolios unfilled. The bright side of the picture was that the Board members who were able to serve devoted time, energy, and talents far above and beyond the call of duty. Mrs. Dunn remained off-Board Chairman of the National Water Item and Mrs. Orrin Johnson served as off-Board Chairman of the State Item on Jury Duty.

Convention was attended by your President and Delegates Adams, Hoverson, Huffman and Moore. All of us returned feeling that the investment in time and money had been amply repaid in information and enthusiasm.

I shall make no attempt here to review program activity during the year. It will be found in the reports of the Board Members. Some highlights do deserve special mention. In October Mrs. Horton Wayne Smith, State President, visited the Harlingen League, addressed the membership at a buffet at the home of Mrs. Adams and later met with the Board. Her visit was most helpful and enjoyable. Also in October an area conference was held in Corpus Christi. Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Adamas attended as Harlingen delegates and reported their impressions at unit meetings in November. Eight members of the Harlingen League were guests of the Brownsville League at a meeting with legislators from this district. It was a golden opportunity to discuss legislation in which the League is interested.

Two routine League activities deserve special attention in this report. Our finance drive held in September was the most successful drive we have had. A larger group of Leaguers worked and several new contributors were contacted. Your Board was thrilled with the success of the drive and felt that it indicated healthy growth in our local League.

### FINANCE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Total Campaign Goal	\$ 550.00	
Actual number of persons who contributed		
Members	2	
Non-members	50	
Actual number of workers	12	
Total Receipts		
Members	10.00	
Non-members	531.00	
Total		541.00
(One \$25.00 pledge not collected)		

Chairman - Mrs. Ellison White

The annual poll tax drive is one of our major services to voters in our community. It is also a source of revenue for the League. This year it is, in addition, a story of unusual devotion to the League. When Mrs. Huffman, who was chairman of this drive, was seriously injured in an automobile accident, Mrs. Dean Howard, who was serving as co-chairman in Harlingen, took over within hours of the accident and managed somehow to fit into her busy schedule many more hours of planning as well as hours of serving as a deputy. Many deputies agreed to work additional hours. Mrs. Chochrane, who served as chairman in La Feria, along with her deputies turned in a most capable performance. We were justifiably proud of the 2050 receipts and 220 exemptions written



and the \$238.60 collected for this service.

One local continuing responsibility was pushed into the foreground again this year. The Leagues study of the health and sanitary conditions in Harlingen and the surrounding area had resulted in 1956-1957 in legislative action and in membership consensus, so that when the health card farce became a public issue again, as a result of an expose by Frank Sullivan of KGBT-TV, the League was in a position to take action. The Board met and authorized Mrs. Hugh Guion and your President to take any necessary action as the situation developed. As a consequence, a delegation of League members called upon the Mayor and alerted him to the existence of amendment, passed at the instigation of the League in January 1957, making chest x-ray mandatory for food handlers. Mrs. Guion and your President attended a meeting of the health council with the city manager and the first Commission meeting at which health cards were discussed. We also were present at the Public hearing in the Commission room and have held numerous private conferences with individuals affected. At the time of this writing, the Commission has not yet acted officially on this matter so that the eventual outcome is not clear.

I cannot conclude this report without stating my personal feeling that the Harlingen League is growing in a healthy way. The success of the finance drive, the number of new members who are active and interested, the unusually large turnout for unit meetings and general meetings, and an ever increasing awareness on the part of the community of our existence and potential are all signs of this growth. None of this could have been accomplished without a membership and Board devoted to the League and its principles. I should like to thank each of you for your part in this successful year.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Ellison F. White

#### REPORT OF VICE-PRESIDENT (Voters' Service)

1958 to 1959 has been a very busy year for voters' service.

In April of 1958 we held a Candidates meeting for the school trustees election. There was a very large attendance at this candidates meeting. This meeting was taped for radio broadcast.

Voters' Service distributed 3,000 State Voters Guides in July. We published a local Voters' Guide and distributed approximately 2,500 of these.

In September 1958, in conjunction with The Brownsville League, we published "Who Me?" These are furnished to the Sheriffs office and enclosed with each jury summons.

Voters' Service distributed 1,500 Voters' Guides on the proposed Constitutional amendments.

In December a City Candidates meeting was held. This received good publicity, and the meeting was well attended. This meeting was taped for radio broadcast.

Poll tax collection has been completed. Chairman, Mrs. M. G. Huffman and co-chairman, Mrs. Dean Howard were in charge. A bad traffic accident put Mrs. Huffman in the hospital so Mrs. Howard assumed full charge and completed the poll tax collection job in Harlingen. Mrs. J. C. Cochran was in charge of Poll tax collection in La Feria. 2,050 receipts and 220 exemptions were written. Everyone cooperated and worked very hard. Thanks are extended to the hard working chairmen Mrs. Huffman, Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Cochran. League members that worked hard are Mrs. John Evans, Mrs. "Ned" Green, Mrs. Smalling, Mrs. Lora Weir, Mrs. W. J. Williams, Mrs. A. L. Holmes, Mrs. Ellison F. White, Mrs. C. Harpin, Mrs. W. Adams, Mrs. Dunlap, Mrs. Frances Moore, Mrs. W. O. Rozell,

Mrs. J. C. Dunn, Mrs. H. A. Shannon, and Mrs. C. W. Graham.

Looking back over the past year your Voters' Service Chairman feels that a great deal has been accomplished. Your chairman wishes to thank every league member that helped to make this past year a successful one.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Wesley Adams  
Voters' Service Chairman

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

In the past year there have been twelve Board meetings, six general meetings including Husbands night, membership coffee, annual luncheon, poll tax coffee at Mrs. Evans, Covered dish luncheon for Mrs. Horton Wayne Smith (Cookie) at Mrs. Westley Adams.

There has been two called meetings of the Board and the minutes of the above mentioned were taken and copies given to Mrs. White, State and National offices.

Thank you notes were written to our contributors and to others who helped us make this year successful.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. E. H. Moore

# TREASURER'S REPORT for the year April 1, 1958 to March 31, 1959.

## INCOME

Dues	255.00
Member Contributions	10.00
Non-member Contributions	531.00
Poll Tax Drive	<u>238.60</u>
Total Income	1,034.60

## EXPENDITURES

Local Disbursements	434.80
State and National Services	<u>350.00</u>
Total Expenses	784.80

Cash balance on hand March 31, 1958	\$ 665.99
Cash balance on hand March 31, 1959	\$ 915.79

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. W. G. Humphreys

# PUBLICATIONS REPORT

All standing orders have been received and distributed to Board members. Materials requested by various portfolio holders have been ordered. Appropriate League publications have been placed in the Public library and High School. Your chairman is also assisted the Voters' Service Chairman in the distribution of local and State



Voters' Guides and has frequently served as telephone committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. A. G. Holmes

TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION, STATE CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES, AND LEGISLATION  
1958-1959 Report on State Item I.

At a membership coffee in September, your chairman spoke on the Texas Constitution giving background and historical information and telling why it should be revised. The activities of the Texas League of Women Voters in promoting research were mentioned.

Assistance in preparing a talk on Texas Constitutional Revision was given to Mrs. P. H. Motheral who spoke to the A.A.V.W.

A combined luncheon meeting of units was held in December at which time State Representative Menton Murray explained methods of research on the Texas Constitution and told of progress being made along that line.

Information for and against the Constitutional principle on State Personnel Policies, was presented at unit meetings. A report that consensus was negative was forwarded to the State League of Women Voters.

Four varieties of flyers on reasons for Constitutional Revision, purchased from the State office have been distributed. Attempts to get newspaper publicity have been discouraging.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. C. J. Hoverson, Chairman

LOCAL CURRENT AGENDA Annual Report

When recapitulating all this years activities in completing the County Survey, I realize that it has been a most active year.

The League's fiscal year began last Spring but the Local Current Agenda continued from the previous year in which "The County Dollar" was studied and reported upon.

In the Spring a study of "County Home Rule" was made, completed and reported to the membership. Other subjects studied and reported on were "Public Welfare" by Mrs. Norma Pollock, "Police Department" by Mrs. Holmes and "Road and Transportation" by Mrs. Rozell and Mrs. Hoverson.

The summer months were a little slow but fall came bursting in with a gust of information on the "Health Department" given by guest speaker, Mrs. Maud Lorange, Director of Nursing Service in the Cameron County Health Department.

Politics and public opinion certainly helped in interesting members and citizens on the topic of "Public Welfare". All that interest and concern wasn't ignored for we procured Mr. Mike Gilbert of Harlingen and Mr. Clyde Tandy, Jr. of Brownsville to be guest speakers at the annual Guest Night to give a report of the Special Welfare Investigating Committee. It has been shown by this non-partisan, non-salaried Board that more investigation should be made in the County Welfare Department, and that action should be taken to right many discrepancies and overlapping.

Each member will receive a report of each section of the county survey in her newsletter. The report on The Health Department, The Historical Background, written by Mrs. Verna McKenna, and the Welfare Department have already appeared in the bulletin.

Be watching for the remaining units in your bulletin.

Respectfully submitted,

Miss Jeanene Ward

#### REPORT OF BULLETIN EDITOR

The Harlingen Bulletin was issued every month of the fiscal year. Mailed with the bulletin in December was Section IV of our Cameron County Survey. Another part of the County Survey, "A History of Cameron County", was mailed with the February bulletin. The March Bulletin contained the section devoted to the Welfare Department.

The Bulletin editor has received a great deal of help. Several editions of the bulletin were edited by Mrs. Ellison F. White. Mrs. Billie Caudle has typed the masters and produced the bulletin copies. I have typed the mailing list and mailed the bulletins.

The mailing list of the bulletin consists of all local members, presidents of all Texas Leagues, members of the State and also the National Boards, and the State and the National Offices of the League. In addition, we have mailed bulletins to anyone who has shown an interest in the local League and to prospective members in the Harlingen and La Feria areas.

The increase in postal rates from two cents to three cents has affected the bulletin expense. The bulletin has cost: \$40.65.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. P. H. Motheral

#### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Your nominating committee submits the following names for your consideration

President	Mrs. Ellison F. White
Vice-President	Mrs. Wesley Adams
Secretary	Mrs. John Weir
Board of Directors	Mrs. A. D. Holmes Billie Caudle (now Mrs. Edwin J. Labadie) Mrs. C. W. Graham
Nominating Committee	Mrs. Edwin Moore, Chairman Mrs. J. M. Evans



Nominating Committee (Continued)

Mrs. Robert Palloch  
(One to be appointed by Board)

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Hugh Guion, Acting Chairman  
Mrs. Grace Howard  
Mrs. M. B. Huffman  
Mrs. O. R. Johnson

REPORT OF BUDGET COMMITTEES

EXPENDITURES

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Presidents Account		
Public Relations		45.00
Delegate expense		65.00
Operating costs		47.50
Audit	\$10.00	
Equipment	10.00	
Supplies	40.00	
Postage	55.00	
Telephone and telegraph	30.00	145.00

PUBLICATIONS

State-National: Cost less sales	50.00	NET	
Local: (yearbook \$45.00)			
Cost less sales	75.00	NET	
Monthly Bulletin	95.00		220.00

ACTION IN COMMUNITY

150.00

STATE AND NATIONAL SERVICES

330.00

AREA FIELD WORKER

27.50

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

1,030.00

INCOME

DUES (55 members at \$5.00)

275.00

Contributions:	Non-members	555.00	
	Other sources	200.00	

755.00

1,030.00

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. C. J. Hoverson, Chairman  
Mrs. W. G. Humphreys  
Mrs. Wesley Adams  
Mrs. Ellison F. White

HARLINGEN

LCA 1958-59

I. Know Your County

Chairman: Miss Jeanne Ward P.O. Box 592

*Correspondence*

*Letter Sept 5 '58. - No answer  
memo from SO - Jan 59  
Report sheet and note Feb '59  
No report*



Harlingen

SURVEY

From March 1959  
Bulletin

WELFARE DEPARTMENT UNIT V

It costs Cameron County \$1.60 to give away \$1.00 in Welfare Funds.

This is one of many factors brought out in the open when Mr. Mike Gilbert of Harlingen, and Mr. Clyde Tandy Jr., of Brownsville reported on the findings of the Special Welfare Investigating Committee at the Guest Night Buffet Supper, February 26, 1959.

This committee was composed of six non-partisan, non-paid citizens appointed by the Commissioners Court to investigate the distribution of food supplies and if Federal Surplus Commodities could be implemented into our County program.

The facts learned from this committee are as follows:

1. The State, County, City and Civic Organizations functioning in their various capacities are duplicating efforts in the entire welfare program.
2. The local agencies also administer the County Welfare with no chief administrator. With no co-ordination there is an abundance in administrative costs.
3. Each case is investigated before given aid.
4. The maximum allowed per family, no matter what size family, is \$10.00 per week.
5. The local welfare agency works on a permanent basis. The County Welfare works on emergency basis.
6. The food a person is allowed to buy does not provide a balanced diet.
7. Usually the division of help is 50-50 between Anglo and Latin. At present the division is 65% Latin and 35% Anglo due to unemployment.
8. Last year \$263,000 was spent on welfare in the county.
9. As of February 12 Harlingen was cut off for all food orders with no explanations why.
10. It was found that the Federal Government could not give the County help because it does not have a Central Welfare Agency nor a purchasing agent, and is not correctly organized and co-ordinated.

The Special Welfare Investigating Committee went to Corpus Christi to study their Welfare Program. It was agreed and recommended to the Commissioners Court that they make a more detailed study of this plan for possible use in our County. The following is the basic organization structure of that plan as set forth in a letter to the Chairman of the Special Welfare Investigating Committee by the Executive Secretary of the City-County Board of Public Welfare of Corpus Christi:

- (1) A non-political, non-salaried Board of representative business men to plan and coordinate the various health and welfare functions, establish policies and standards, and budgets; also, a paid executive with a business and administrative background.
  - (2) A Health unit with a Doctor trained in public health as Director. This unit to be responsible for:
    - a. General health services and health education to the community.
    - b. Supervise and coordinate medical care for the indigent. (Note-determination of financial eligibility to receive this free medical care would be a welfare function).
  - (3) A Family Welfare unit to interview, investigate, diagnose and certify need for and financial eligibility to receive:
    - a. Direct assistance (food, clothing, etc.)
    - b. Children's services (delinquent and non-delinquent)
    - c. Financial eligibility only for medical treatment, hospital and nursing home care. (Note-medical need certified by health unit).
- The director of this unit should have a broad knowledge of welfare functions, administrative ability, and be a graduate of a recognized school of social work.

Within this basic structure all health and welfare needs can be developed and coordinated. The authority and responsibility should be placed with the overall Board and provision made for each unit and subdivision to have an advisory Board.

Provisions in ordinance and resolution that would assist in better operation:-

- (1) Cities and County agree on a percentage of participation and set up one budget a year.
- (2) Have one central disbursing agency for all health and welfare funds.

- (2) Have one central disbursing agency for all health and welfare funds.
- (3) Give Board authority to set up job classification by grade, salary for each grade, personnel policies as to vacation, sick leave, hiring, salary raises, insurance, bonds, etc.

This committee made the above recommendations and asked to be dismissed as a committee on May 1958 but to this day has not received any reply from the Commissioners Court.

FOR LEAGUE AND CITIZEN CONSIDERATION:

1. Can WE help in bringing about these well-made recommendations?
  - (a) IF SO, HOW would we be able to remove the Welfare Department from politics, which seems to be its largest stumbling block?????
2. What are YOU going to do about it?

Information compiled by Miss Jeanene Ward.

Mrs. Eugene Hughes  
3812 Gerlin  
Houston 4, Texas



HARLINGEN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
110 Austin Avenue  
HARLINGEN, TEXAS



LOCAL PROGRAM:

Describe any activity on your local Program.

Our Local Agenda was a County Survey which has been almost completed in this last year. Publication has begun in sections in local Bulletin. All units heard reports from County Health Nurse - also a dinner meeting was held (with good TV coverage) on County Welfare Department Local Continuing Responsibility - 2 Health Sanitary Conditions in Harlingen.

Harlingen  
58-59

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
HARLINGEN, TEXAS  
808 E. Taylor

Jan. 22, 1959

Mrs. Horton W. Smith  
1007 West 24th St.  
Austin 5, Texas

Dear Cookie:

I have been so remiss in correspondence I am almost embarrassed to write now. It is inexcusable - but a series of crises (all minor) both family and League have left me with no time to do the things I really wanted to do.

We enjoyed your visit so much. My husband has commented often since you were here that your evening with us was the most enjoyable in a long time. He is eager to know you better and to meet your husband, and I am sure you will have a telephone call almost as soon as he gets to Austin with a free moment.

The League in Harlingen seems to have had a rebirth. I honestly don't know what happened. I am sure your visit had much to do with it. The symptoms are absolutely amazing attendance at unit meetings all fall. We have had guest speakers in each instance - but even that normally has not brought such fine attendance. (2) Our Poll Tax Workshop to kick off the poll tax drive had such a good turn out that we had to borrow extra coffee cups from neighbors. So many new members have been working on the poll tax drive that the oldsters are having a well earned semi-vacation. (3) Three prospective new members have called in the last month to ask how they go about joining the League.

At least part of this activity is due to a hot local issue which cam to light suddenly. One of your local Continuing Responsibilities has been Health Conditions in Harlingen and surrounding area. You may remember that everal yrs ago (before my time in the League, that is) we were successful in spearheading the passage of an ordinance requiring food handlers to have a chest x-ray. About 2 wks ago I heard the end of a TV newscast stating that twelve people had been picked up by the police for serving food without a "Health Card." Since I had missed the first of the broadcast I called the TV reporter to get the news first hand. He was in a crusading mood and when I told him that the League had long been concerned about inadequate enforcement of health regulations and ease of obtaining a "health card", he took the bait. The next day he got a card for himself from an oesteopath and his secretary got one from a "reputable" physician in 8 minutes by a stop watch and without examination or chest x-ray. As a matter of fact, the physician had not even been in his office at the time. The news that night was a dramatic expose and taking advantage of publicity at long last, our Board decided to plunge into the problem. TV cameras have followed us around for days. We have conferred with the mayor, city mgr., commissioners, health council, etc. - all with good publicity. It has been a refreshing change to have people calling us for news - and with an aroused public, we are hopeful of securing workable and enforced health regulations. We are now awaiting the results of a survey by the City Sanitarion (sic) before deciding on our next move. It has been fun, too.

The only sad thing in our lives at the moment is the critical illness of Myrtis Huffman. I am sure you remember her - our long-time Bulletin editor - this year chairman of Nominating Committee and heading up the poll tax drive. She was returning from collecting poll tax last week when her car was hit broadside by another speeding car. She was thrown from her car and then pinned under it for some fifteen minutes before the car could be removed. Her condition is still critical and we are all most concerned about her. --- This letter is long enough, I am sure, to discourage you from any further desire to hear from me. Very sincerely /s/ Olive White



*Harlingen - LCA*

HARLINGEN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
COUNTY SURVEY  
UNIT I

*From  
File, B...*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAMERON COUNTY  
by  
Verna McKenna

Cameron County, in the tip of Texas, has approximately twenty-five miles of shore line on the Gulf of Mexico and a like number on miles of Padre Island and Laguna Madre. On its southern boundary are ninety-three miles of the meandering Rio Grande, shared with Mexico as an international Boundary. This, together with Hidalgo County on the West, composes the heart of the rich, lush Magic Valley of the Lower Rio Grande, one of the most intensively cultivated areas of the world, home of the famed Texas red grapefruit and other citrus, vegetable and cotton crops. North and Northwestward is the great ranch country, of which the King Ranch is world-known.

Of the county's three ports on the Intracoastal Canal System, two, Port Isabel and Port Brownsville, are deep water, the latter now ranks as one of the world's largest cotton ports. The Port Harlingen waterway link provides a 12 X 125 foot channel for barge transportation.

Historically, the saga of the county's waterways dates back to 1519-1520 when the Spanish explorer, Pineda, sailed his little fleet into the natural harbor between two islands and named the pass, Brazos de Santiago, because of its discovery on St. James Day. In the nearby river, which he named Rio de las Palmas for the native palm groves, a remnant of which remains today, he spent forty days repairing his boats and exploring the country upstream for a probable distance of eighteen miles. Pineda's favorable report of the area caused Francisco Garay, Governor of Jamaica, to attempt a settlement at the mouth of the river three years later. During his voyage an election was held for an alcalde and five councilmen for the new town, "Garay", to be founded at the mouth of the Rio de las Palmas, which had it materialized, would have been the first European settlement in the New World.

Practically all of what is now Cameron County was given by the King of Spain to some half-dozen of his countrymen for settlement. In 1771, Jose Salvador de la Garza established the first settlement at Rancho Viejo in the Espiritu Santo grant. Other Spanish names on the pages of its history include those of Alonzo de Leon, Miguel de la Falcon, the Balli's, Jose and Nicholas, the latter a priest, for whom Padre Island is named, and the great colonizer, Jose Escandon. For almost a hundred years thereafter history takes no note of this tip of land. In the early spring of 1836, the Texas Colonists were fighting the War of Independence from Mexico, whose independence from Spain had been established in 1821. The warship INVINCIBLE of the Texas Navy was sent to patrol the waters at the mouth of the Rio Grande as 2000 Mexican troops, mobilized at Matamoros, were waiting for transportation to reinforce Santa Anna, then enroute from the Alamo to San Jacinto. The little vessel performed creditably in a skirmish with the Mexican warship BRAVO and the U.S. POCKET, carrying contraband cargo and a false manifest.

The nation's wars have brought soldiers to this area periodically. In the War with Mexico, General Zachary Taylor and his occupation troops planted the American flag on the banks of the Rio Grande, March 28, 1846, and immediately threw up an earthen breastworks at a point opposite the Mexican town of Matamoros. Taylor left his fort garrisoned with fifty men, under Major Jacob Brown, moving his troops to protect the base of his supplies at the harbor, the small village at the point of the Isabella grant that had been a summer resort for wealthy Mexicans since 1777.

On May 3, the Mexican General Arista laid siege on the fort while Ampudia crossed the Rio Grande to prevent Taylor's return. On May 8 the forces of Taylor and Arista met in the battle of Palo Alto on a prairie about midway.

On the following day the Americans defeated the Mexicans again in the Battle of Resaca de las Palmas. The field work on the Rio Grande, originally called Fort Taylor, was given the name of Fort Brown in honor of its gallant commander who died of wounds received the second day of the siege. Brownsville, the town that grew up around the fort, commemorates both the man and the fort.

Fort Brown was the first United States fort built in Texas. It existed in various forms for a hundred years. Over it have flown four flags; the banner of the bandit Cortina, the Lone Star flag and the flag of the Confederacy, each have, for a time, replaced the Stars and Stripes. Men from its barracks quelled Indian raids in the early 1850's. In 1860 Robert E. Lee was stationed there while he disposed of the Cortina problem. In 1906 Fort Brown made news because of the raids of its Negro Soldiers. The period from 1914 to 1917 was known as the "Border Trouble". Brownsville was made headquarters for a military District that included 50,000 National Guardsmen. Many of the men stationed here during the bandit period returned to make the Valley their home.

The California Gold Rush of 1849 also brought travelers through the Brazos Santiago Pass to be outfitted for the voyage up the Rio Grande as far as Carmargo. Some stayed to go into business. The long waterway and the southern route appeared to many travelers to be less hazardous than the deserts and Indian country of the overland routes.

By 1859, Point Isabel was doing a business of ten million dollars in export and import goods for all the Rio Grande country. The lighthouse built by the Government in 1853 to guard Brazos Santiago Pass, stood sentinel for a hundred years before it became Texas' smallest state park.

During the War between the States soldiers of both sides occupied Brazos Island, Point

Isabel and Brownsville at various times. A granite monument marks the site of the Battle of Palmito Ranch between Brazos and Brownsville. Here was fought, on May 12 and 14, 1865 more than a month after the surrender of General Lee, one of the most unexpected battles of History. Col. John S. (Rip) Ford with a small detachment of 200 men defeated 300 Union soldiers in the last land engagement of the war. The Confederates lost only five men. The Federals had about thirty men killed and wounded and 115 men taken prisoners. From these prisoners the Confederates first learned of the surrender of General Lee.

On some early Texas maps the area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande was labeled "Wild Horse Prairie". Because of the mild climate and the protection of the chaparral, cattle also thrived here and it was said to have been the cradle of the longhorn.

Under Mexican government from 1821, when Mexico gained her independence from Spain, the area was a part of the State of Tamaulipas but from the treaty of Velasco in 1836 it was claimed by the Republic of Texas and was included in the county of San Patricio. Ten years later, this immense area was reduced by the formation of Nueces County out of the Southern portion. In 1848 a further reduction was made by the creation of Cameron County, containing 3,308 square miles, an area four times the size of Rhode Island and twice the size of Delaware. The county's size was again reduced with the creation of Willacy and Kenedy Counties to the North, to its present area of 883 square miles.

Ewen Cameron, for whom the county is named, was a Scotchman who fought in the Texas Revolution and then engaged in the cattle business. Later as captain of a company of cowboys he took part in the ill-fated Mier Expedition. Although Cameron drew a white bean in the "Black Bean Episode" at Mexico's Perote Prison, he was executed there on April 25, 1843, with the holders of the black beans because he was a leader.

When organized in September 1848 the county seat was located at Santa Rita with Israel Biglow of Brownsville as the first county judge. This settlement, about three miles West of Brownsville on the Old Military Road, and the first made North of the Rio Grande by Anglo-Americans, had for its founders American citizens living in Matamoros at the beginning of the Mexican War. One of these, Charles Stillman, promoted the town at Brownsville and in January 1849 the county court was transferred there.

In 1850 the city government was organized and by 1853 the population had increased to 3,500. Lt. Chatfield, in his "Twin Cities of the Border, published in Brownsville in 1893, gives the population of the county as only 15,000 at that time.

Traffic on the Rio Grande and the pass to the Gulf was a major industry for many decades as there were few roads, only trails. Indians of Northern Mexico had made well-defined trails in the eighteenth century to the salt mines, located about fifty miles North of the river and about twenty miles West of the Coast. Fought over for two centuries, El Sal del Rey, once the royal salt mine of the King of Spain, became a military objective during the Civil War. The wagons that came down the "Old Cotton Road" bringing the South's cotton to the Rio Grande, the only unblockaded port, carried back salt that, at times, brought as much as \$1.30 per pound.

The first railroad in the county was built by General Phil Sheridan in 1864-1865 to facilitate the movement of troops and supplies from Brazos Island to White's Ranch on the river. The Rio Grande Railway, completed by its builder, Simon Celaya, replaced the temporary one of Civil War days and connected Brownsville with the coast. In 1909 a charter was taken out for the Point Isabel and Rio Grande Valley Railway which was rebuilt as a standard gauge road.

Modern growth of the area dates from 1904 when the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexican Railway was completed through Cameron County to Brownsville. The stage lines to Corpus Christi and to Alice, that had been in existence for some years, were no longer needed.

The towns designated at intervals on the railroad's blue prints as Combes, Harlingen, Bessie (later named San Benito), soon were realities. Other communities that grew into towns or were laid out by developers were La Feria, Santa Rosa, Primera, Rio Hondo, Los Fresnos and Olmito.

Lon C. Hill, founder of Harlingen and one of the promoters of the railroad, planned his town for the strategic position on the Arroyo Colorado and at the junction of the spur road to be built westward. In 1927, the Southern Pacific lines were completed into the Valley with Harlingen at the crossroads point. Harlingen's phenomenal growth, as a commercial and distribution center with an estimated population in January 1959 of 58,000 is proof of Mr. Hill's vision of the future of his town.

With the advancement of rail transportation, irrigation projects were promoted and financed. Again, Lon C. Hill's foresight was in the forefront. He planned, financed and put into operation Water District No. 1, in Cameron County. Thousands of acres of rich alluvial soil covered with an almost impenetrable jungle of brush were cleared; irrigation systems were installed, bringing water Northward from the river by natural flow, all of which required vast sums of money plus the vision and work of many promoters.

Now, only people were needed, many people. People to buy the land, build homes, plant and harvest a variety of crops the year round. This need gave rise to the hundreds of land companies formed in the mid-west to bring people en masse on "homeseekers trains" to the Magic Valley of the Lower Rio Grande.

The first land boom, small and local in nature, concerned sugar cane land but that industry failed in 1910. Six years later the first large commercial citrus orchard was planted in the Valley and soon the citrus-grove and vegetable land boom was on. The land company development of the Valley reached its peak in the mid-twenties. In the 1940's many of the remaining large tracts of native brush were cleared for cotton. About 250,000 acres are now under irrigation in Cameron County.

The geographic location of the county gives it certain advantages: through its ports, the Southernmost terminus of the Intracoastal Waterway System, is handled much of the port business of Northern Mexico; as a port of entry into Mexico; as an international airport and as a recreation center. Development of the county's more than 330 acres on Padre Island began with the completion of the two and a half million dollar causeway connecting the Southern tip of Padre Island with Port Isabel. The waters of the Laguna Madre, the resacas, the Rio Grande, and the Arroyo Colorado offer major fishing facilities. These, together with a sub-tropical climate, make the county attractive to tourists from the mid-west and Canada.

Every phase of development seems to come in its time and for its need. It would now appear that the next stride forward in the tip of Texas is to prepare a playground and a comfortable, attractive place for people of the golden years to live after retirement.

# # # #



Return Postage Guaranteed  
HARLINGEN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
110 Austin Avenue  
HARLINGEN, TEXAS

Mrs. Eugene Hughes  
3812 Gerlin  
Houston 4, Texas



3812 Gertin  
Houston 4, Texas  
September 5, 1958

Miss Jeanne Ward  
P. O. Box 592  
Harlingen, Texas

Dear Miss Ward:

I have just received your name as the local current agenda chairman of the LWV of Harlingen. As state chairman of LCA, I am much interested in in how you and your committee plan to proceed with your "Know Your County" study. When you have made your plans, I hope that you will write me and give me your outline for work.

Your president, Mrs. White, will receive shortly a publication from the Illinois State League: "A Guide to Publishing a Know Your Town Booklet." This has been ordered by our State Office, because we feel that it will be helpful to local leagues, whether they are doing a "Know Your Town" or "Know Your County" study. I'm sure you will see it before long. After you have finished with it, will you please return to our State Office, so others can use it.

Do you have our new state publication: "On the Home Front"? If not, be sure to get it, for you will find that the 10 steps for a successful current agenda most helpful.

I might also suggest that you ask someone on your committee to keep a running account of the steps you take in carrying out your item. This will furnish a record of your accomplishments for your League files, and will be building for the future on LCA items.

I will be looking forward to receiving your outlook for work.

Cordially,

cc:White  
SO

Mrs. Eugene H. Hughes

Braunagel

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HARLINGEN

CAMERON COUNTY SURVEY  
SECTION IV

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION

It is only too often that the Public Health and Sanitation Department is incorrectly confused with and combined with the Department of Welfare. These two departments are different and separate departments in the county. Public Health and Sanitation is concerned with the health and sanitation of all persons in the county, while the Welfare Department is concerned with the welfare of the indigent. Public Health and Sanitation will be discussed here and Public Welfare will be discussed in a later section.

The Public Health and Sanitation Department not only serves the rural areas of the county but also serves urban areas. This department is responsible to the State Health Department for fulfilling the responsibilities and duties as set up by the State, to the Cameron County Commissioners Court for its finances and to the Board of Health for its policies. The director of the Health Department divides his time and services with Hidalgo County and is in actuality only a part-time worker in Cameron County and only partially paid by Cameron County. Under his direction are two Venereal Disease or Health Investigators who are paid by the State, two clerk stenographers and three separate units which include Nursing Division, Regional State Laboratory, and Sanitation Division. There are also four County Doctors who are not under the County Health Department but who are appointed by and responsible to the Commissioner's Court for each of the four precincts in the County. These physicians care for the Federal, County and City prisoners within their areas, sign legal health warrants for quarantine purposes, and care of the indigent sick.

The Board of Health is composed of four members, one from each precinct, and one-at-large, appointed by the County Judge. There are seemingly no specific qualifications for being a member of this Board. The Board seldom, if ever, meets as a group but are called on the telephone by the chairman to make major decisions in policy. This Board makes policies and approves new employees recommended by the director of the Health Unit. Unfortunately they do not have access to finances and even though they could create a new, needed position, it would be only if the Commissioners Court agreed.

**THE BUDGET:** Approximately, Ninety eight cents (98¢) per capita is budgeted for public health in Cameron County. Too often the budget and audit of the County Health Department is lumped together with the Welfare Department. From a total of \$199,520.00 budgeted in 1958, only \$67,500.00 was for the Department of Public Health and Sanitation. These funds are matched by the State and Cities also contribute to the fund, as follows:

\$67,500.00	County Funds
\$55,460.00	State Funds
\$17,937.00	City Funds
<u>\$140,897.00</u>	Total for Public Health and Sanitation

**HOSPITAL FACILITIES IN CAMERON COUNTY:**

Brownsville	-	Mercy Hospital	-	Private, General Hospital.
		Lower Lamb Home	-	Private, with Medical supervision for retired persons.
San Benito	-	Dolly Vinsant	-	Private, General hospital.
Harlingen	-	Valley Baptist	-	Private, General hospital.
		State Tuberculosis Hospital	-	State, Tuberculosis Hospital.
		Sunland Clinic	-	Private, General with mental and geriatric patients.

**OTHER FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN THE COUNTY:**

San Benito	-	Sunny Glenn Home	-	Private Orphanage
Harlingen	-	Boys Ranch	-	Supported by Service Organizations,
		Girls Residence)		for boys and girls from broken homes.

**I. NURSING DIVISION:**

The purpose of the public health nursing is not only to treat the indigent but is also for public health education and prevention of disease. Venereal Diseases and Tuberculosis are the only diseases which are treated by the public health nurses. A register of all tuberculous cases in the County is kept in the San Benito office. All cases discharged from the Harlingen State Tuberculosis Hospital are followed for at least two years by the public health nurses. Other services rendered, besides those listed on the organizational chart, are epidemiology (case finding for tuberculosis), immunization clinics, teaching preventive medicine to individuals through home visits, child welfare clinics, and venereal disease investigations.

For information of organization and clinics, refer to the organizational chart.



On the last census, 1950, there were 140,000 people in Cameron County. That census has probably increased in the past eight years to a total of 160,000 people. There are twelve public health nurses serving 160,000 persons in an area of 885 square miles. This gives a ratio of one nurse per 13,300 people. The national ratio is standardized at one nurse to every 5,000 people with no bedside care, and one nurse to 2,000 people where there is bedside care. To bring our county nursing division up to a national ratio, based on one nurse per 5,000 people, we would need twenty more nurses, making a total of 32.

Many times we find problems vary from region to region and area to area. There are several unique problems which the Cameron County Health Nurse may find in this area. They may be listed as follows:

1. Language barriers
2. Low economic conditions of the people.
3. No control over midwives, who are very prevalent in this area.  
(In Brownsville one year there were 2,000 babies born, only 900 of which were delivered by a doctor.)
4. Communicating with and educating people whose background historically includes many superstitions, especially those which relate to accepting proper medical advice.
5. Nurses are not covered by a Nurse Practicing Act, in Texas, but are included in the Medical Doctor Practicing Act.

II. Sanitation Division )

) These two divisions will be discussed in your next  
newsletter.

III. Regional State Laboratory )

FOR PUBLIC CONSIDERATION.

Public health constitutes a wider area than care of the indigent ill. Its functions are education, training of health personnel, promotion of better community health and the prevention of disease.

1. More county health nurses with a higher rate of pay are needed to bring Cameron County up to minimum national standards.
2. A more effective integration of the formulation of policies and appropriation of funds with more scheduled meetings would be desirable.
3. Giving support to a Nurse Practicing Act in the next Legislative session would be of benefit to our public health nurses.
4. There is a need to clarify and separate the funds of the Public Health and Sanitation Department from the Public Welfare Department.
5. There are no requirements for frequent health examinations for teachers.
6. A full-time director of Public Health and Sanitation would be desirable.

# STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

U. S. P. H. S. (Special Projects)

Commissioner's  
Court - Finances

Board of Health  
(Policies)

Director of Cameron Co.  
Health Department

County Physician, Prec. I

County Physician, Prec. II

County Physician, Prec. III

County Physician, Prec. IV

Administration (2 clerk -  
Stenos.)

V.D. Inspectors

Division of Sanitation

Nursing

Division

Region State Lab.

General  
Sanitation  
4  
Sanitarians

Milk  
Inspection  
1  
Sanitarian

Rodent  
Control  
2  
Laborers

Mosquito  
Control  
4-8  
Laborers

Rabies  
Control  
2  
Laborers

Harlingen Office \*\*  
3 Nurses - 1 clerk - 1/2 X-Ray Tech.

Central Office-San Benito\*\*\*  
4 Nurses - 2 Clerks \*

Brownsville Office \*\*\*\*  
4 Nurses, 1 aide,  
1 Clerk, 1/2 X-ray Tech.

\* 1 clerk paid by U.S.P.H.S.

\*\* This office serves population North of the Arroyo including Harlingen, La Feria, and Santa Rosa.

\*\*\* This office serves population South of Arroyo, including Rio Hondo, Lozano, Omito, LaPaloma, Los Indios, Santa Maria, Los Fresnos.

\*\*\*\* This area serves Brownsville, Port Isabel and surrounding territory.

Baby Clinic  
1 clinic week  
V D Clinic  
1 clinic week  
Dermatology  
Clinic - 1 cl. wk.  
TB Clinic  
3 days week  
Immunization Clin.  
General Nursing  
Service-Schools

V D Clinic  
1 week  
Immunization  
Clinic - 1 wk.  
Well Baby Clinic  
General Nursing  
Service-Schools

Well Baby Clinic  
1 week  
Prenatal Clinic  
1 week  
TB Clinic  
1 week  
Immunization Cl.  
1 week  
General Nursing  
Service-Schools

Los Fresnos

Well Baby	IMM. cl
1 evy 2 wk	1 - wk

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HARLINGEN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
110 Austin Avenue  
HARLINGEN, TEXAS



Mrs. Eugene Hughes  
3812 Gertin  
Houston 4, Texas



8159

DO YOU KNOW ? ? ?

That TB is catching

That Cameron and Hidalgo Counties have more know<sup>n</sup> cases of TB than any other counties in the United States

That 171 cases from Harlingen have been hospitalized in the past three years

That 80 children aged from one month to eighteen years are now hospitalized at the Harlingen State TB Hospital

That if these were the figures for encephalitis, small pox, Typhoid fever or other catching diseases, it would be considered an epidemic

HARLINGEN could lead the way to a healthier Valley with a good X-Ray program.

YOU can help by asking your City Commission for such a program.

COURTESY OF HARLINGEN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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YOU can help by asking your City Commission for such a program.

COURTESY OF HARLINGEN LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

December 5, 1939

4

The Board of the Harlinger League of Women Voters met in the Directors Room of the Harlingen National Bank at nine-thirty (9:30) A M on December 2, 1939. Present were Madeline White, Humphreys, Adams, Higgs, Evans, Labadie, Neversen and Weir.

The minutes of the November 4th meeting were read and approved.

The Treasurer, Mrs. Humphreys, reported a balance of \$874.51 as of November 30.

Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Weir were appointed, with full approval of the board, as co-chairmen for the poll tax drive.

There will be a candidates meeting at City Hall on December 3rd at 7:30 PM. Mrs. Holmes is calling the membership asking them to attend. Questions to ask the candidates were discussed.

Mrs. Neversen reported on the LaFeria group - they will meet on the second Monday of each month.

Dr. Allison White will give the program at the December 16th luncheon. The luncheon, to be held in the Saddle and Birloin Room at 12:00, will be a meeting of the combined units. The new City Commissioners, the Mayor and the City Manager will be invited.

There being no further business, the meeting ~~will~~ adjourned.  
was



Oct. 21, 1959

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Burlington held their regular meeting Oct. 7th in the directors room at the Burlington National Bank.

Present were Mrs. Ellison White, Wesley Adams, A. D. Holmes, C. W. Graham, Haskell Metheral, W. G. Humphreys and Miss Jeannine Ward.

Mrs. Metheral moved and Mrs. Graham seconded that the League send for the T.V. cartoon on "Informed Vote". The motion carried.

Mrs. Metheral moved and Mrs. Holmes seconded that the League write poll taxes in January, 1960 without remuneration from the County. The motion passed.

Mrs. Adams moved and Mrs. Metheral seconded that the League order 1000 Voters Key to 1960. The motion passed.

The board approved the appointment of Mrs. John Blair to the nomination committee.

Miss Ward moved and Mrs. Graham seconded that the League will form a steering committee, of at least ten (10) members, to spearhead the drive for about 1-year for food-handlers with the understanding that the League representative will not serve as chairman. Motion passed.

Mrs. Adams was appointed the League representative to the steering committee.

Mrs. Holmes moved and Mrs. Metheral seconded that Mrs. Hugh Quinn and Mrs. Adams be allowed to select additional names to the steering committee. Motion passed.

The resignation of Miss Jeannine Ward was read. Mrs. Adams moved and Mrs. Holmes seconded that the resignation of Miss Ward be accepted with regret.

The treasurer reported a balance of \$824.90 as of Oct. 1, 1959.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Wesley Adams

HARLINGEN

LCA - 1959-60

I. ? *County survey?*

Chairman: Mrs. Dan Murphy 1913 Laurel Drive (Off board)  
(Juvenile Delinquency of County Survey)