A Horse of a Different Color

The Livery Stable

The livery barn of the 19th century served the same purpose as the gas stations of today. In 1908 it cost 20¢ to feed your horse while you were in town shopping. The livery barns also rented horses and buggies by the hour or day.

Another business that once filled a vital need in the community and is now all but forgotten was the livery stable. Nowadays when we decide to make a trip, we first must go to the filling station and put in 5 - 10 dollar's worth of gas to be sure that we will not run out before we get back. But in the early days, one could go to the livery stable and rent a buggy and team and drive all over the country all day and until ten o'clock at night, if you wanted to, (I know, I've done it) for only $2.50.

When I was young, the only means of transportation I had was a little bay pony that I had traded for from Carl Graham, and a good saddle that I bought from Chub Gibson for $25 on credit. The saddle was worth more than the pony. When I would ride into town I would take my pony down to the livery stable and have the attendant feed him some oats or other grain at noon. This would cost me 15¢. If I was going to be in town for some time I would have him given some hay. This would be 10¢ extra.

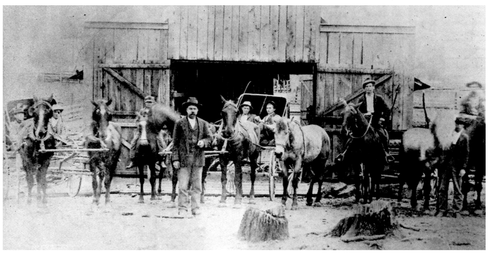
We used to have two good livery stables in town. One was just across the street, south of the theater, on East Third. The other one was built by Charlie Corey, just north of his hotel on the corner of Second Street.

Claud Hanna memories

Images courtesy of Delaware County Historical Society

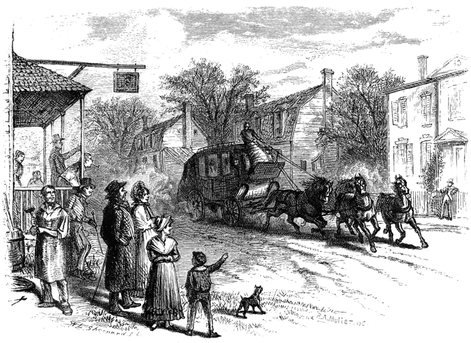
Samuel Whitfield Allen (left) was one of thirteen children born to his family. The year of his birth is unknown as his mother rearranged all the birthdates to keep the boys out of the Civil War. Allen was an undertaker who owned a horse-drawn hearse. Because he needed horses to pull his hearse, he went into the livery stable business. After three years he sold and added his livery stable business to Palace DePriest's and Mack Long's stables.

About 1910, **Henry William Anderson** bought 1/2 interest in the Palace F. DePriest livery barn. They occupied the Blue Front Livery Barn on Second and Main. In 1912, DePriest and Anderson moved to the Red Front Livery Barn, three doors east of the Grove Sun which at that time was located at the southeast corner of Third and Main (below).



In **1913 a fire** destroyed the livery barn and threatened every building in that block. The livery business was relocated to the Corey barn.

Images courtesy of Delaware County Historical Society



DePriest and Anderson Livery also operated a stage line between Grove and Bernice to make connections with the trains in each town. The stage left Grove each day at 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. and left Bernice each day at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. In those days a livery rig could be rented all day for about two dollars.

The **George W. Goad** family came by train to Vinita, Oklahoma, then by "hack" to Grove. The "hack" was a horse-drawn vehicle, like a stage-coach, but without doors. With their personal belongings piled high on the hack, they traveled the approximate twenty miles of narrow, winding dirt road from Vinita to Grove. They forded Grand River which was low at that time. If the river had been up (the water deeper), the hack would have been driven to a ferry on which it would have been rafted across the river.

The earlier stage line had used buggies, but in 1918, H.W. Anderson and Max Long went into the taxi business. They had new cars and would drive to all points at reasonable prices. They continued to meet all trains at Grove and Bernice.

Cars were first seen in Grove about the time of statehood. When automobiles came into use the speed limit all over town was 10 mph. Lengthy regulations described in detail how they were to cross intersections, pass other cars, and similar subjects.

Image courtesy of Delaware County Historical Society

Ruby Browning told of the first car her father Ollie Legg purchased:

He went to his living room, rolled back the carpet, counted out $500 in cash and paid for the car.

An incident of nontraditional work occurred in February 1918, when an Oklahoma City garage hired Eva Pullen and Nora Palmer on a trial basis as the first women garage workers. Required to work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at least six days a week, they donned one-piece, khaki bloomer uniforms to perform the duties of a handyman in an "automobile hospital." Expected to clean cars, fill gasoline tanks, sweep floors and mop up grease, they received the same pay as men. If these women proved to be good employees and if trade gravitated to the garage with women employees, other garages were expected to follow suit.

Central High School, Washington, D.C., high school girls learning car mechanics in 1927

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