



Hallettsville Brick Hotel 1891—1899

By Brenda Lincke Fisseler

The saga of the Hallettsville Brick Hotel began in the Fall of 1891 and ends in 1947. The building, located on north part of Lot 1 Block 20, was built to serve as the Murchison Lodge No. 80 in 1891, but later was sold and converted into a hotel. The story of this magnificent brick effigy will be the subject of several upcoming newsletters involving numerous owners, various name changes and at the end, a burning conclusion.

Our story begins with three respected men in the City of Hallettsville, French Simpson, T.Y. Hill and the McKnight Brothers who had all become part owners of the Lodge building and the property on which it was located.

On January 9, 1896, the three men formed a stock company for the purpose of building a new brick hotel in Hallettsville. Simpson, Hill and the two McKnight brothers each deeded their share of the lot to the new company and the Hallettsville Hotel Co. was created. The only caveat was that T.A. Hill retained sole ownership and control of the first story of the existing brick building.

With the stock company in place and awaiting its charter, the old Masonic Hall was remodeled to serve as a modern brick hotel and a contract was awarded to the local carpentry firm of Leopold & Hannig for a two story addition. Louis Mohrmann was awarded the contract of the painting and papering in the new hotel.

At the end of January, a contract was signed between the Hallettsville Hotel Co, and Mr. L.S. Pepper for the lease of the building.

*“Great minds are related to
the brief span of time
during which they live
as great buildings are to a
little square in which they
stand...”*

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Furniture for the entire building had be ordered from St. Louis by local merchant Kahn & Stanzel. Pepper expected the building to be open the 1st of March.

That deadline proved to be a bit ambitious. Instead the building opened on March 26, 1896. An article in the Hallettsville Herald on opening day described the hotel in glowing terms.

“The double parlors on the second floor are not excelled in spaciousness by many fine city hotels. The rooms are all elegantly papered and furnished, and the entire building is supplied with electric lights, water works, hot and cold bath, etc. All floors are covered with very handsome Japanese matting. Messrs. Hill, Simpson and McKnight have invested about ten thousand dollars in it and Hallettsville has the finest brick hotel in Southwest Texas.”
Hallettsville Herald March 26, 1896

Tourism was also on the mind of the local newspaper.

“With a three-story opera hall, a brick hotel and the largest pavilion in Southwest Texas, Hallettsville will not be ashamed to bid for large public gatherings in the future.”
Hallettsville Herald April 2, 1896

On the June 1896 Sanborn Fire Map, the establishment was known as the New Pepper Hotel.

The hotel continued to improve it’s services in any way possible. For example in July of 1898, during the erection of the new Lavaca County Courthouse, the Hallettsville Hotel Company contracted with Mr. Otter, the plumber for the courthouse project, to connect the City Hotel (as it was referred) with the big sewer laid for the county. The hotel was now able to install the most modern sewage including wash basins, lavatories, baths etc.



During 1898 and 1899, the City Hotel had a revolving door of managers: Mrs. E. A McCormick, Mr. and Mrs. E.B. Trammell and Mr. and Mrs. C.D. Meyer.

Next:
Hallettsville Brick Hotel Part II