



Sokol Hotel

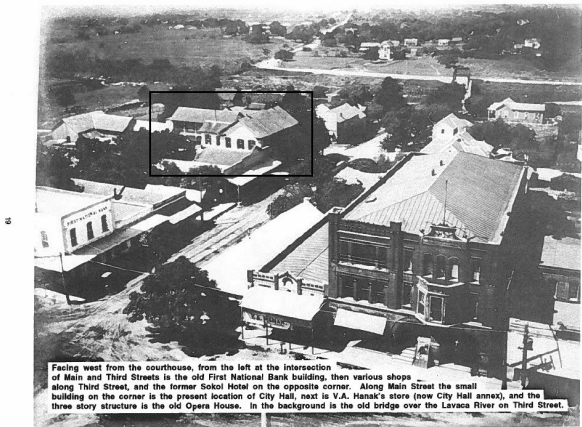
By Brenda Lincke Fisseler



The Sokol Hotel was established in 1889 by Czechoslovakian born Ferdinand Sokol. Sokol came to Texas at the age of 21 and was employed by J.C. Elstner in his blacksmith shop. Blacksmithing remained Sokol’s occupation for many years, even after entering the hotel business.

Sokol married Mary Brooks in 1887 and on April 16, 1889 purchased the W 1/2 of Lots 1 & 3 in Block 3 from the Heirs of Wm. & Cynthia Smothers for \$1,000.00 (Note: this property had been purchased by the Smothers in 1851 from Collatinus & Mary Jane Ballard).

In May, the work began on the structure that would become Sokol’s residence and hotel. On July 18, 1889, Sokol took possession of his new residence which the local newspaper had earlier stated was a “mammoth structure”. In 1897, a large two story addition was made to the original hotel building and a brick sidewalk was laid in the front of the hotel.



Facing west from the courthouse, from the left at the intersection of Main and Third Streets is the old First National Bank building, then various shops along Third Street, and the former Sokol Hotel on the opposite corner. Along Main Street the small building on the corner is the present location of City Hall, next is V.A. Hanak's store (now City Hall annex), and the three story structure is the old Opera House. In the background is the old bridge over the Lavaca River on Third Street.

“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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Sokol Hotel

Many hotels have in their history unique experiences and the Sokol Hotel was no different. While it housed visitors, private and public events were also hosted by the hotel. In 1893, the Blacksmith Union Meeting was held at the Sokol and in 1932 and 1933, the hotel was used as an office and warehouse for food distribution for the American Red Cross.

Unusual events also transpired at the hotel. In the July 21, 1904 issue of the Hallettsville Herald, it was reported that there was an exciting time at the Sokol Hotel Monday night. A wildcat which was kept in a case in the old Pavelka & Linhart Saloon, escaped and was on the war path.

He took possession of the hotel in the dead hours of the night and in his prowlings killed two geese, fifteen chickens and two tame cats. With a little strategy he was cooped in a room and with a little more strategy returned to his cage.

On April 8, 1933, Ferdinand Sokol died at the Sokol Hotel. He was survived by his wife and four children, Etta (W.D.) Timm, O.B. Sokol, Rudolph Sokol (an adopted son) and Ferdinand (Fritz) Sokol.

In August of 1936, it was reported in The Tribune that the Sokol Hotel was being completed renovated both inside and out. The building had a new coat of paint, gas was being installed and alterations in the rooms. One section of the hotel in the rear was torn down and moved to Worthing where Mr. Tom Najvar would erect a residence. The building would not serve as a rooming house under the charge of Mrs. W.D. Timm the Sokol's daughter.

After the death of Mary Sokol in 1944, Etta Timm eventually became the owner of the west 1/2 of Lots 1, 3, 5 & 7 in Block 3.

In 1961, the Sokol Hotel sustained heavy roof damage because of Hurricane Carla and on February 15, 1980, the Sokol was demolished. It had been serving as the home of Mrs. Timm. The land was purchased by the National Bank to be used as a parking lot.



Sokol Hotel Being Demolished

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