

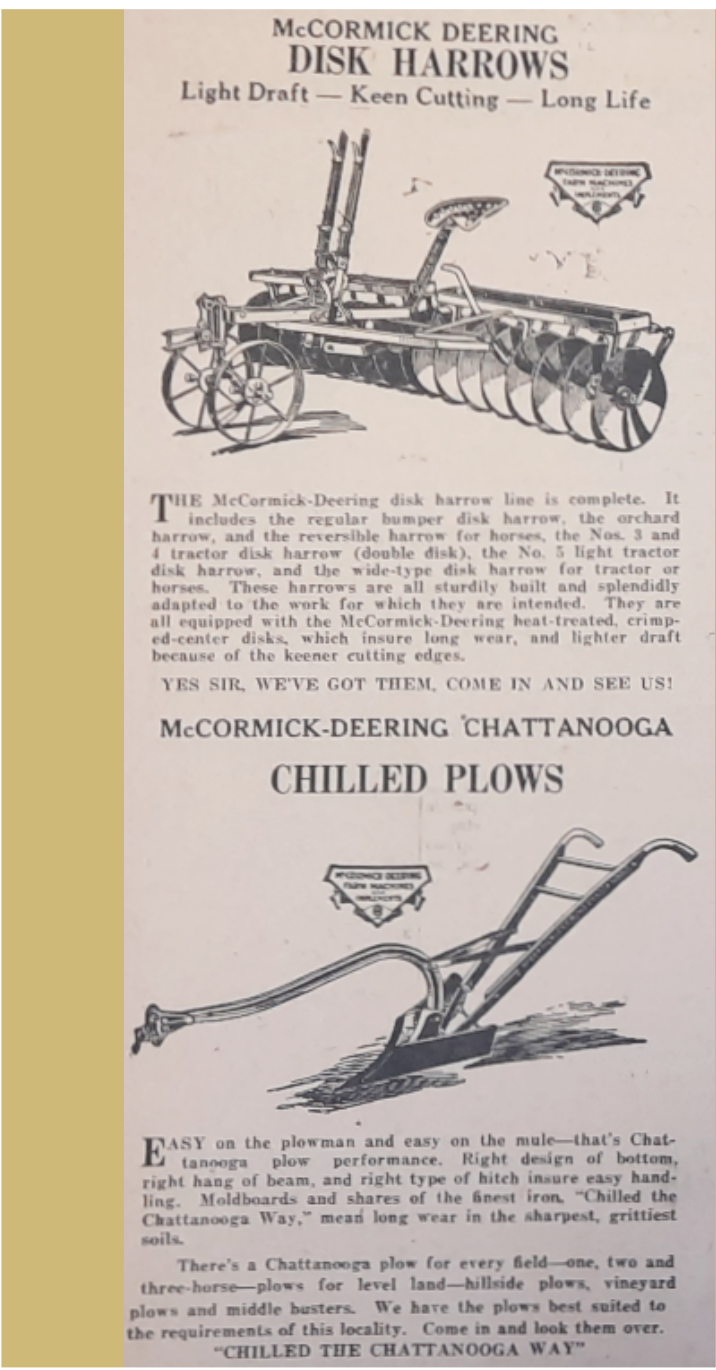
Commerce of a Century

Louisa County is historically thought of as rural farm land; however, an inventory of business in the last 100 years showcases the growth and development of Louisa County's diverse economy. This development is linked to historical events that emphasize larger trends within the state, country, and world. This research-based exhibit seeks to highlight key features of Louisa’s economy that have become prominent in the decades of the last century.

1920s

Agriculture was the primary and established economy for Louisa County during the 1920s. Livestock production centered on poultry, while corn was the common food crop. Farmers’ needs were met by local businesses such as the Louisa Hardware Co., which sold items including plows and tillers.

For other goods, residents relied on suppliers who were often the only one of their kind in the area. For example, the Woodward-Vaughan Motor Company was the primary automobile dealer of Louisa in the 20s. Out of necessity, Louisans often turned to larger markets such as Richmond for specialty items.



Louisa Hardware Co. (1929, October 10). Old man winter is not far away [Advertisement]. *The Central Virginian*, 6.

Did you know?

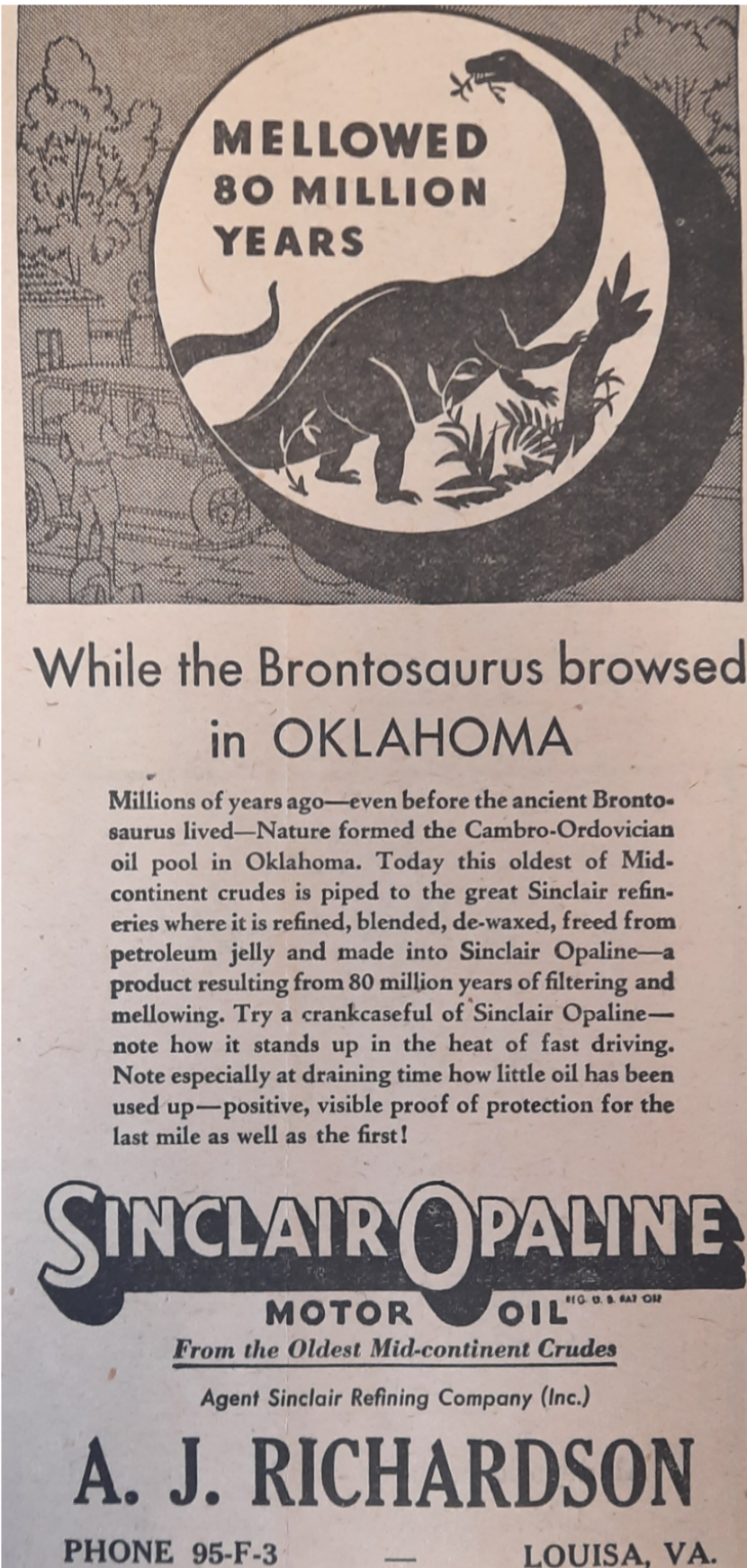
Started as a side business in 1928, the Louisa Feed Service was one of the largest and longest operating farm suppliers in Louisa. In 1977, it relocated from Fredericksburg Avenue to Route 22 where the Orange-Madison Cooperative now stands.

1930s

Advertisements were more diverse in the 1930s with a larger variety of goods and services marketed. A notable change was the emphasis on automobile transportation. With the construction and expansion of the state highway system under the 1932 Byrd Road Act, service stations and garages were more common. Motor oil and gasoline were increasingly marketed to Louisans as automobiles became more prevalent.

More emphasis was placed on other types of businesses as well, such as the local banks and department and retail stores. For example, the Peoples Bank of Piedmont began operating in Louisa and the Spotless Stores chain became popular.

Growth in technology impacted local business also. As telephone service expanded in the area, business owners were encouraged to become connected to the telephone line to promote their accessibility to customers.



Richardson, A. J. (1933, July 20). Mellowed 80 million years [Advertisement]. *The Central Virginian*, 2.

1940s

As a result of World War II, increased industrial production fostered fresh economic opportunities during the 40s. Local financial institutions offered more loans and new insurance agencies formed. These now-common financial services were just emerging in the post-war era.

Businesses incorporated war propaganda into their advertisements and war bonds became popular financial investments. Advertisements called citizens to aid the war effort by donating materials such as kitchen fat, used to make anti-aircraft shells.

Yet, other aspects of Louisa’s business remained unchanged. Modernization seen in the 1930s continued with the sale of electric appliances and the expansion of electrical services. Agriculture was ongoing and local shops offered needed products such as fertilizer and fencing.



Peoples National Bank. (1943, April 1). Reserves win many battles [Advertisement]. *The Central Virginian*, 1.