

Tillman County Chronicles

Tillman County Historical Society Column

by Joe Wynn

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ABOVE: The Kelly Hotel at 8th and Grand is pictured from a 1920 newspaper ad.

Kelly Hotel was early Frederick institution

In Frederick's early days, most visitors arrived by train. They would disembark at the Frisco Depot, which was located at the tracks on West Grand, and they didn't have to look far for accommodations. The Kelly Hotel was located just one block away at the corner of Eighth and Grand.

There were other places to rent a room in early-day Frederick, but by all accounts the Kelly Hotel was one of the nicest.

It was located at 300 West Grand next door east of the current Frederick Leader building. The hotel was an impressive three-story brick structure. It contained 50 rooms and a large dining room. Its builder was A.H. Krause, the contractor who constructed most of the buildings in downtown Frederick.

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ABOVE: An early photo (circa 1910) shows the Kelly Hotel (left) and the current Frederick Leader building. The Leader building was then known as the Mosby-Schwartz building and housed offices of Mosby-Schwartz Real Estate. A sign on the west side of the building announced "POOL HALL." At the time, the current Leader building had a second floor (removed in the 1940s), which housed several lawyers' offices. The Leader's first offices were located in the back part of the building. By 1916, the building was referred to as the Mosby and Fyle Building and the newspaper had taken over the whole first floor.

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A 1916 Tillman County industrial publication places the Kelly Hotel's construction in 1908. An early photo shows the hotel in place prior to construction of the Leader building.

Excerpts of the 1916 industrial article read as follows:

"The hotels of the city are the mediums through which the prospective residents or visitors to the city get their first impression.

"Frederick has a hotel which is without a question of doubt in keeping with the balance of the progress that has made the city so conspicuous. The Kelly hotel is

known by every traveling man as one of the best along the line.

"The Kelly hotel was established in 1907. The building was built by W.H. Kelly, now deceased, in 1908. At that time the building was not as pretentious as it is today, an extensive addition being built by Mrs. Kelly the year following her husband's death, and since that time she has conducted the hotel on the plan originally started by her husband to give efficient service and satisfaction to everyone who stops at this place.

"The Kelly hotel has in the neighborhood of 10 employees. Some of

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these have been with Mrs. Kelly since the hotel was first established.”

“The Kelly hotel is valued at about \$35,000. It is equipped with 50 bedrooms and a dining room that will seat 32 guests. The rates charged are \$2 a day.”

Four years later, in 1920, a Kelly Hotel ad in a similar publication made no reference to Mrs. Kelly but named A.P. Marsh as the Kelly Hotel's manager and cited it as “The best \$3.50 a day hotel in

Oklahoma.” The 1920 ad also said that improvements and additions were planned to double the hotel's capacity.

“Largest and best equipped hotel in Southwestern Oklahoma,” the 1920 ad boasted. “Convenient to banks, post office, and railway station.”

Joe Wynn is a member of the Tillman County Historical Society Board of Directors.