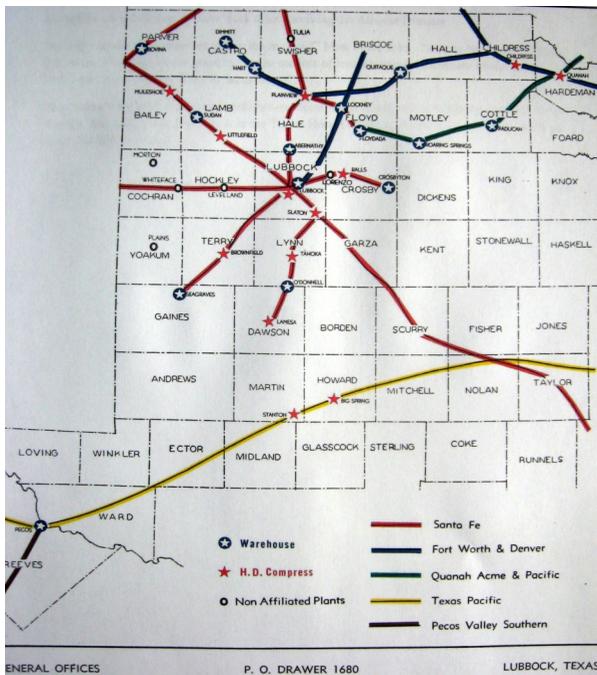


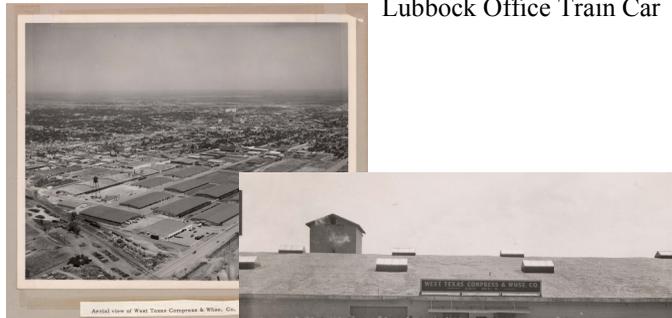


Dick Chambers, Harris Underwood,II, Arch Underwood, Fred Underwood, Wayne Prather

Arch and Minnie Underwood had four children—Harris, Mary Katherine, Fred and Dorothy—who grew up in Athens until the family moved to Lubbock in 1939. Harris, Fred and their brothers in law, Wayne Prather and Dick Chambers, all served in WWII. They started their careers with the company at the bottom, working in compress operations across the Panhandle. By 1955, all were assigned to the Lubbock headquarters where they continued the work of their predecessors managing and expanding the business.



Lubbock Office Train Car



In 1916, the High Plains produced 11,984 bales. In 1937, the 23 counties produced the first million bale crop. By 1966 production was 2,201,000 bales, 50% of all the cotton produced in Texas. Texas was the largest cotton producer in the country and the US lead the world.

The 27 Underwood plants measured approximately 5,000 acres. In the years from 1950-1966, 3300 people were employed and \$29,000,000 wages were distributed in towns where the Underwood plants were operated.



Harris F. Underwood (1864 - 1929)

Around 1880, Harris Underwood moved from Alabama to Texas with his bride Mary. He worked as a cotton merchant, until 1904 when, financed by his good friend John Murchison and the First National Bank of Athens, he built the first of his eleven cotton compresses in the East Texas blackland belt.

At this time, the western part of the state was considered suitable only for grazing and ranching. Cotton production scarcely extended beyond Abilene at the turn of the century, but on road trips west, Underwood saw that S.S. Rush tried raising cotton near Lubbock. (Ranchers over ran it with herds of cattle, but Rush finally did raise 6 bales of cotton in 1902 and hauled them by wagon over dirt roads 165 miles to a gin at Abilene.)

HFU believed, long before others did, that, if they found water, the future of low cost cotton production lay in the Panhandle. He said with his shoes off he knew "if the land would grow cotton or just sweet potatoes." In 1923 he called his son Arch and said "I've found the place where they're going to grow cotton and you'd better get out here". He began to purchase land for the future plants. Plainview was the site of his first compress and warehouse, soon followed by Ralls, Crosbyton, Quanah, Paducah, Lamesa, Slaton and Littlefield.

He died in the spring of 1929, only months before the Stock Market crash of the Great Depression, leaving his only son Arch with a good name, \$250,000 debt "spread from Hell to Breakfast" and plans to have a warehouse within reasonable hauling distance of almost every cotton field in the area. It took 30 years to complete his plans. By selling off the old compresses, Arch and his children saw to it that no one who helped them finance the company ever lost a dime. Arch gradually moved the whole operation to the South Plains. After a record cotton crop in 1937, Arch moved his family to Lubbock. By 1947, his plants formed the largest inland compress and warehouse concern in Texas.

A further challenge to Arch came from the portside cotton compresses and warehouses who were spending millions to corner the compressing market on the Gulf. In 1922, Harris and the Texas Compress and Warehouse Association hired A. L. Reed, a Dallas lawyer, to represent them in this fight against unequal railroad fees. The Interstate Commerce Commission agreed this constituted a restraint on trade, but Houston economic interests appealed all the way to the Supreme Court. In 1930 Mr. Justice Brandeis, an advocate for free and open competition who enjoyed striking down back room deals, finally declared the case dismissed. Mr. Reed described Arch as the "smoothest politician and public relation man that the compress industry has ever had."



Arch S. Underwood (1892-1972)

By 1879 East Texas had a railway system, but west of Denison, there were less than 100 miles of track. The Fort Worth and Denver (City) Railway was the first one constructed through the Texas Panhandle and it is closely tied to the histories of the communities established along it. Railroads, newspapers and the towns "boosterism" brought growth and development as rails delivered materials and supplies to the Plains and then took cotton and cattle back to markets. Railroads helped account for the economic boom during WWII and Arch served as a Director of the Fort Worth and Denver Railway.



Judge Marvin Jones (1882-1976) had the rare opportunity to serve in all three branches of federal government: as a congressman from Amarillo, a Judge on the US Court of Claims and an advisor to three presidents on matters of agriculture. Difficulty obtaining credit for his father's farm influenced his lifelong efforts to reduce interest rates for farmers.

Jones served on the House Agriculture Committee from 1921 and was Chairman from 1930 to 1940 when he was appointed to the Court of Claims. He promoted FDR's "New Deal" for agriculture through the Agricultural Adjustment Act and other laws supporting farmers with low interest loans and mortgages, soil conservation, farm subsidies, agricultural research and new markets. He helped found the Farm Credit Administration and the Federal Farm Mortgage Corporation and influenced the first guaranteed annual appropriation for agriculture in United States history. During World War II, he brought stability to the War Food Administration with principled leadership centered on public service rather than bureaucratic power. The Judge returned to the Court of Claims in 1945 and became Chief Judge in 1947 where he served till 1964. His brother Hub Jones owned Hub Motor Company in Lubbock.

Bob Poage (1899-1987) spent his early years on the Lazy 'leven Ranch in Throckmorton County where his father was a pioneer rancher and cattleman, driving cattle up the Chisholm Trail. This gave Bob an interest in the economic and social plight of the rural Texas farmer and rancher whose life and working conditions he sought to improve.



Poage served in the Texas House and Senate where he was Chairman of the Senate Ag Committee. Elected to Congress from Waco in 1937, he served on the Agriculture Committee and as Chairman from 1967 to 1974. Known as "Mr. Agriculture" to some, he supported government programs protecting farm prices through federal subsidies. Championing the small farmer, he helped establish the 1949 Rural Electrification Administration and the Rural Development Act in 1972. Recognizing the need for clean water, in 1965 he drafted the Poage-Aiken Act which established water and wastewater systems throughout rural America.



George H. Mahon (1900-1985) filled the newly created 19th Congressional District seat in 1934 and held that seat until 1978, his 44 years of continuous service making him the longest sitting member of Congress. He never forgot he was a farm boy from West Texas and always represented the interests of his district well. As chairman of the subcommittee on the War Department (1949-52 and 1955-78), Mahon was one of the best informed people in Washington. He was one of only half-dozen men who knew of the Manhattan project for development of the atomic bomb. As Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations from 1964 until his retirement in 1978, he was one of the most powerful men in Washington. Little known to the general public, he was a Representative upon whom the essential work of Congress depended.



Looking for an inexpensive way to provide office space and with his connection to the railroads, Arch Underwood bought four Pullman cars from the Santa Fe Railroad that were being sold for scrap in 1950. "The Gainsbough" (which was part of the *Twentieth Century Limited* running from New York to Miami) was renamed the "Fair Deal" and he kept it as a sleeping car for traveling. With the central partition removed to make a communal space, the car slept 22 people. Family, friends, coaches, politicians, editors, reporters, and others enjoyed a variety of long and short trips. The suites were named for his close friends described here:

Sam Rayburn (1882-1961) won a seat in the Texas House in 1906 while attending law school at the University of Texas. He was reelected twice, and in his third term at age 29 he served as Speaker of the House. Rayburn entered the US Congress at the beginning of Woodrow Wilson's presidency and stayed in office until the beginning of John Kennedy's. He served as Speaker of the House for 17 years, the longest tenure in US history. His after hours "Board of Education" meetings in the House would gather powerful chairmen for poker, bourbon and a frank discussion of politics. Harry Truman had just arrived there when he received a call telling him to come to the White House where Truman learned FDR was dead and he was now President.



"Mr. Sam" participated in passage of most of the significant legislation of the first half of the twentieth century, including the establishment of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Communications Commission, and the Rural Electrification Act. As a mentor and friend of Lyndon Johnson, Rayburn was instrumental in his rise in power and they were a potent team when LBJ was Majority Leader in the Senate. Neither of them signed the Southern Manifesto in opposition to racial integration of public places. Although he supported most New Deal legislation, he occasionally cut across party lines. Rayburn's fairness and candor won respect from both sides and his personal integrity was legendary.

Fred Vinson (1890-1953) was born in Louisa, Kentucky, son of the local jailer who died when Fred was a baby. He won a seat in the US Congress in 1924, where he befriended Missouri Senator Harry S. Truman. He became a close advisor, confidant, card player and dear friend to Truman. In 1938, FDR appointed Vinson to the Court of Appeals and in 1943 named him Director of Economic Stabilization. In 1945, President Truman named him Secretary of the Treasury to stabilize the American economy during the last months of the war and he negotiated payment of the British loan and lend lease settlements of the Allies. He acted as first Chairman of the International Monetary Fund. In 1946 Vinson was named Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the last candidate to be confirmed by a Democratic President. He died in office in 1963.



Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973) was 36th President of the United States. He designed the "Great Society" legislation with its emphasis on civil rights, Medicare and Medicaid, aid to education, the arts, urban and rural development and the "War on Poverty". Influenced by teaching at a segregated school in Cotulla, he vowed "this nation [can] never rest while the door to knowledge remains closed to any American." LBJ served in the House from 1937 to 1949 where he worked hard for rural electrification, public housing and elimination of government waste. In a close and controversial race, he was elected Senator. A friend of Vice-President John Nance Garner and Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn, Johnson had an uncanny ability to gather information on his fellow legislators, incredible persuasion skills and an imposing presence. In 1953 he became the youngest minority leader ever and then an amazingly effective Senate majority leader. In 1960, John F. Kennedy, hoping to hold the South, asked Johnson to be his running mate. After winning the election, JFK appointed LBJ head of NASA and embarked on the Moon landing program of the '60's. Following Kennedy's assassination, Johnson promised to continue with JFK's progressive vision for America. He launched the War on Poverty, Job Corps and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), the counterpart to the international Peace Corps. He said "There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves." Despite impressive domestic achievements, LBJ's legacy was equally defined by failure to lead the nation out of the Vietnam War. He retired in 1969, declining to run again.

Wright Patman (1893-1976) served in the Texas House, and then was elected to the US Congress from Texarkana in 1928. He supported domestic programs of Truman, JFK and LBJ but energetically attacked banks, the banking system and the Federal Reserve. While House Chairman of the Banking Committee, he questioned the Fed Chairman A. Burns, asking "Can you give me any reason why you should not be in the penitentiary?" Patman was the first to call for an investigation of Watergate. He served 24 terms in Congress but was removed as Chair along with Bob Poage in the 1975 revolt against seniority.

