

Highland County Historical Society celebrates 50th anniversary, Part XLV

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H.C. Historical Society**

True to our purpose, the Highland County Historical Society collects information, mementoes and furnishings from its entire history. Documenting lineages, education, religion, businesses, architecture, agriculture, artifacts and politics to make it available for enjoyment and research is our mission and our goal.



Yes, it does matter who your parents are and their occupation, whether your family came here in the late 1700s or yesterday. History matters and any one facet left out would result in less than history, wouldn't it?

The Society has collected and safeguarded exceptionally well, but closing out our first 50 years and entering our next 50, our intention is to be much more purposeful about documenting.

As these 50 articles during the 50th year of the Society were first contemplated, a framed business ad hanging in the pioneer hall was noticed. It was first thought of, with a smile, as maybe a hint about how we might raise money for the restructuring of the back wall. Saner minds prevailed, though. Where could we find a 1917 Ford Touring Car in pristine shape for which we could sell enough coupons at 50c each to pay for it with a surplus to pay the contractors?

But the next most noticeable feature of the advertisement is the name of the store sponsoring this ploy to get customers into their store. Feibel Bros? The manufacturer of safes? No, that was Gross-Feibel. Were they the same family?

Here is where it gets tricky with information scarce and hard to find. The accession sheet (a single page data form we have for every item in the museum) says simply that it was received from Ronald Stratton in 1975. During the hour or so I looked, all I found in the HH library, was an ad on the back cover of a 1907 Highland Magazine and a picture labeled "Feibel Store girls in 1907 parade." In 1907, gold trading stamps and in 1917, an automobile. Their fortunes were going up and their advertising remained aggressive proclaiming, "Feibel's. Highland County's Greatest Store!"

But right here at hand is Elsie Ayres' Hills of Highland with the Feibel Brothers featured on pages 734-735.

The store started as Ike S. Meyers' store for gentlemen and was located on West Main

Street. His son-in-law acquired the store and renamed it I.P. Strauss and Brother and Company.

Strauss' son-in-law, I.A. Feibel, managed the store for several years before becoming sole owner naming the business Feibel Brothers. After I.A. Feibel's death in 1892, his four sons: Jacob, Michael, Julius and Louis continued to operate the business. Feibel Bros. was the first such store in Hillsboro to employ lady clerks.

Emma Shipp, daughter of Dr. B.R. Shipp, was the first to break tradition and become a saleswoman in Hillsboro. The women clerks were known as "Feibel's Girls." Feibel's expanded until the 1920s before closing in 1925.

Some of us are left to wonder if the Jacob Feibel of Feibel Bros. is the same Jacob Feibel who was treasurer for the Gross-Feibel (foundry) and for whom it is named? But many of you readers know, I am sure, so either you will let me know or some future research will reveal the answer.

In any case, thank you to Mr. Ronald Stratton for sharing this advertising poster. It is so illustrative of the times. And it raises more questions, for instance, who won the Ford?

Appreciate, write, preserve, save and share!