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Editorials—Sports—Comics
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Purchase of Calves Costing \$2000 by Optimists In Depression Year Started Livestock Show

By CLIFF SHERRILL

It is easy to understand the zip and zeal that make the Southwestern Livestock Show vibrate with enthusiasm when the records are read of how the exhibition started in 1930.

Thanks to the records kept by Mrs. C. W. Mottinger, wife of the secretary of the El Paso Optimist Club in 1930-31, a complete account can be reported of the organization of the Southwestern Baby Beef Ossen. and its first show.

Set Pitch

Enterprising work done by the Optimist Club and the Chamber of Commerce in 1930 set the pitch for what became the Southwestern Livestock Show that will have its 32nd annual showing Feb. 5-12 in the show buildings on the Coliseum grounds.

Mrs. Mottinger did not confine her neatly typewritten records to proceedings of the Optimist Club. She included affairs in which the Club was interested.

Under date of July 15, 1930, she wrote: "The Southwestern Baby Beef Show Assn. was organized at a meeting at the Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of having boys and girls feed out baby beefs. The territory included covered 11 counties in Texas and 11 counties in New Mexico.

Named President

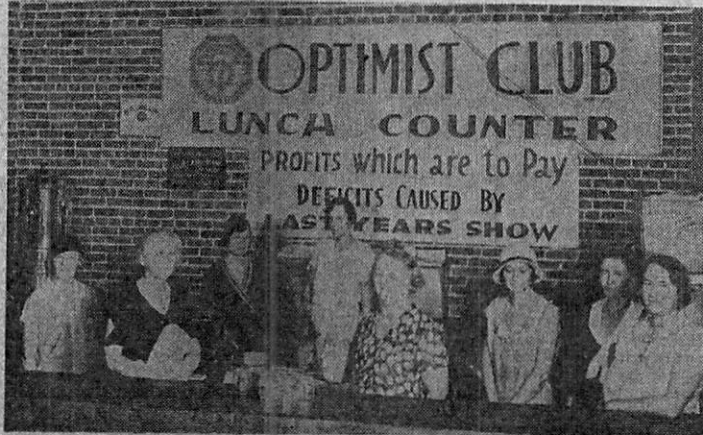
"The Optimist Club sponsored the organization and agreed to underwrite local expenses, including the premium list and securing a place for the show.

"Optimist W. T. Tolbert, leader of the work in the Optimist Club, was elected honorary president of the Association for life. Dr. H. L. Kent, resident of New Mexico A. and M., was elected president."

Mrs. Mottinger went on to give more details: "To start the feeding program, a carload of purebred Hereford calves were distributed among 9 boys in the 22 counties. All of the expense, which amounted to more than \$2000, was underwritten by the Optimist Club.

Groups Co-operated

"The Club had the co-operation of local business men, railroad officials, bankers, packers, and other civic groups, as well as the Agricultural



PAYING STOCK SHOW DEFICIT—The sign in background tells the story of how these young feeders made and sold sandwiches and other food to wipe out the deficits of the 1930-31-32 livestock shows. From left: Mrs. John Moss, Mrs. C. W. Mottinger, Mrs. J. R. Kriechbaum, Mrs. H. M. Burton, Mrs. R. H. Gudger, Mrs. Phil Warren, Mrs. David Mulcahy and Mrs. W. T. Tolbert.

tural Colleges of both Texas and New Mexico. The feeding period began on March 1, and ended with the show in October, 1931.

A report on that show was written by Mrs. Mottinger under the title, "The First Show."

"The first Southwestern Baby Beef Show was held in the Poe Building at 601 Texas street, Oct. 1, 2 and 3, 1931. It was a success. Attendance the first day was estimated at 3000.

"This show was the culmination of a year's work by the Optimist Club of El Paso to arouse interest in feeding out West Texas and New Mexico cattle on West Texas and New Mexico feeds, said Dr. R. H. Gudger, Optimist and superintendent of the show.

Exhibited Calves

"There were 30 4-H Club young people who exhibited the calves. The boys slept with their calves at night and the three girl exhibitors were given rooms at hotels."

The report went on to say that in addition to the 49 calves shown, there were 40 hogs exhibited in the ton-litter contest sponsored by the El Paso Kiwanis Club. That was a total of 89 animals.

The Optimist Club gave the young feeders a banquet at the Paso del Norte Hotel. Prize money distributed totaled \$800. The prize money was contributed by C. N. Bassett, El Paso Electric Co., El Paso Natural Gas Co., El Paso Cotton Industries, Texas Cities Gas Co., Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Co., the American Hereford Cattle Breeders' Assn., and the Chamber of Commerce.

Animal Patriotic

The Grand Champion calf, owned by Maurice Pardue of Loving, N. M., was exhibited in the lobby of the hotel during the banquet.

Mrs. Mottinger's report said: "When the group sang 'America,' he (the calf) leaped to his feet and stood patriotically at attention, and when the auctioneer proclaimed the Stock Show and calves far above average, the Grand Champion applauded with an enthusiastic 'Baw-w-w!'"

The Optimist Club bought the calf for 30 cents a pound. The calf weighed 890 pounds. Peyton Packing Co. bought the first prize winner from the Club for \$99.60.

Sale of the calves brought an average of 10½ cents a pound. (Beef prices had just

dropped 3½ cents a pound under impact of the depression.) Twenty calves drew prizes. The 29 calves that drew no prize money took a loss of from \$25 to \$30 a head.

Mrs. Mottinger reported that, in spite of these financial setbacks resulting from low prices, "the young folks were undaunted and plans were made for the next year's show."

That show was held as planned. It and the succeeding shows for several years resulted in deficits that were paid by the Optimist Club, with the help of wives of members and friends who helped in a multitude of ways.

Funds Repaid

Money borrowed by the Optimists to carry on the Southwestern Baby Beef Show was repaid out of proceeds from lunches and other affairs sponsored by the Club, with the women lending willing hands.

Mrs. Mottinger wrote: "The going was tough for these pioneers. But the Optimist Club even had an exhibition building. Plans for an exhibition building remained others to realize. Although a deficit, the



WINNER IN 1932—Miss Emmy Lou Snelson with the Grand Champion Hereford fat calf of the Southwestern Baby Beef Show 29 years ago.

after the 1931 event, put on one in 1932, 1933 and 1934, determined to firmly establish the undertaking, because members believed it would prove a tremendous asset for El Paso.

Show Got Larger

"The show after 1934 got too large for the club to handle. The Southwestern Livestock and Agricultural Assn. was organized and took it over. Joe Evans was the first president of the organization. The first show this organization held was in 1935 in a garage building in Five Points."

In May, 1942, Mrs. Mottinger wrote: "Now there is a \$321,000 Coliseum and when and if this is formally dedicated and the keys turned over to County Judge M. Scarborough, high tribute will be paid to the memory of those pioneers who blazed the trail and made all this possible."

Early Optimist Club presidents who helped nurture the Southwestern Baby Beef Show through its tough years included M. H. Burton, 1930-31; D. Long, 1931-32; Dr. H. L. Kent, 1932-33, and P. E. Long, 1933-34. The organization

was formed to take over the show that became the great Southwestern Livestock Show.



MT. SINAI SPEAKER—Alexander Miller, national director of the Community Service Division of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, speaks at 8 p. m. tomorrow at Temple Mt. Sinai at 900 North Stanton street on "Human Relations—It's Role in America Today." The public is invited.