

McLaughlins prospered

Oil, ranching were central to family success

By Jerry Lackey

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After serving with the 503rd Aero Squadron in World War I, Clarence McLaughlin bought a train ticket to Texas with his \$60 discharge money and the determination to enter the oil business.

The story goes that Clarence Thurston "C.T." McLaughlin was born Jan.

31, 1897, with the smell of oil in his nostrils in Arthurs, Pennsylvania. The family had a gas well in the garden instead of a sundial.

Young Clarence's parents were John Mark and Cora Giffith McLaughlin. His father, John Mark McLaughlin, was an oil producer in the fields of western Pennsylvania. The McLaughlin children attended public schools in Shipperville, near the world's first oil town, Titusville.

In 1919, Clarence became a partner with

George Cooper in a drilling company based in Wichita Falls. They started drilling in Archer County.

Two years later the company was operating several rigs and McLaughlin introduced the Diamond M logo.

"For 25 years, I was in it and it was a hard life," he told a newspaper reporter years later. "I owed a million dollars. You have to be in the drilling business. I would wake at night and see the men I owed



Mark McLaughlin said in 1992, the Diamond M Museum was closed and the collection given to Texas Tech Museum and is currently housed in the Diamond M wing at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

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HOMESTEAD

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C.T. McLaughlin founded the Diamond M Foundation in 1949, financed by royalties from the ranch.

was completed on Diamond M land in December 1949 at 650 barrels a day. The next year, a new producing well on the ranch came in at an average of every five days.

In 1950, McLaughlin built an office in Snyder. He purchased 6,000-acre Kuteman Ranch in southern Parker County in 1950 and the 2,300-acre Shamrock Ranch near Colorado Springs in 1953.

McLaughlin became known from Austin to Washington and London, according to a story in a 1958 issue of the Abilene Reporter-News.

He held posts in state and national Democratic Party organizations and served as chairman of the Texas Department of Public Safety Commission. He was chairman of the board of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame at Oklahoma City,

Oklahoma.

"He'll give a party at the drop of a hat — especially if the hat is dropped into the political ring. The guest list included all the Texas governors from Coke Stevenson and Allan Shivers to Dolph Briscoe and Senator Lyndon Johnson have been at the Diamond M Ranch at those parties," according to the Reporter-News story.

"He had a love for those show horses," said his son Mark McLaughlin. "They became part of the social events at the ranch."

At a Charity Horse Show in 1942, C.T. McLaughlin exhibited Gray Esquire, a five-gaited gelding, and Mr. FDR, a three-gaited gelding over 15-2.

Other entries in shows included a Tennessee walking mare named Jolly Girl and quarter

horses by J.T. Jones from Robert Lee; C.H. Wylie, Blackwell, Duwain Hughes, San Angelo, and Roy Spiers, Roscoe.

C.T. McLaughlin founded the Diamond M Foundation in 1949, financed by royalties from the ranch. It benefitted educational institutions, cultural organizations and other philanthropic projects.

Evelyn Claire McLaughlin started collecting music boxes and crystal glasses, among other things in 1921. The collection eventually included the McLaughlins numerous paintings and other art pieces they purchased through the years including Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, W.H.D. Koerner, Peter Hurd, Manuel Acosta and Frank B. Hoffman.

Their collection soon outgrew the ranch home and was moved to the first floor in the McLaughlin's Diamond M Building in Snyder on April 1, 1964.

After the death of Claire McLaughlin in 1971 and Clarence July 29, 1975, The Diamond M Museum Foundation trustees, who included the McLaughlin heirs, continued to operate. In 1981 a contract was drawn up with Western Texas College to administer the museum through the Scurry County Museum with funds provided by the foundation.

In 1992, the Diamond M Museum was closed and the collection given to Texas Tech Museum and is currently housed in the Diamond M wing at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Mark McLaughlin said.

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standing around the bed holding out their hands."

Evelyn Claire Littleton was a schoolteacher in Knoxville, Tennessee. She came to Wichita Falls as an employee of Miller Pipeline Company. On Aug. 6, 1921, she married Clarence McLaughlin.

C.T. and Evelyn McLaughlin had four children: Jean McLaughlin DeFord, Evelyn McLaughlin Knox, Ruth McLaughlin Riddle and John Mark McLaughlin.

John Mark McLaughlin, of San Angelo, was named for his grandfather and established his own destiny as a rancher, lawyer and banker. With his sons, Brian and Matthew, he still oversees his Double M Ranch land in Nolan, Tom Green and Schleicher counties.

The C.T. McLaughlin Company drilled in the Permian Basin around Big Spring in 1920s and 1930s.

In 1935, McLaughlin purchased a ranch in Scurry County, 12 miles southwest of Snyder and named it the Diamond M. He added acreage to the original purchase until the ranch totaled 5,200 acres. He stocked the ranch with Hereford cattle. He also ran sheep and show horses.

The discovery of the Canyon Reef field near Snyder in 1948 brought new economic life not only to Scurry County but also the entire region.

By 1949, the Diamond M Ranch was declared an oil field with the discovery of a pool of deep oil, later known as the Diamond M Pool.

Lion County Company's No. 2 McLaughlin

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