

Photo of the Month

Charles Decker and Decker Motor Co.



Charles Decker, 1953 City Officials Photo Neg. # 011362

For nearly 30 years Buick and Pontiac motor vehicles arrived for sale to the people of Rogers in the showroom of Decker Motor Company. Located at Second and Poplar Streets, the Decker Motor Company represented one of several automobile dealerships which operated in the core business district of downtown Rogers during the 1930s-60s. McNeil Chevrolet conducted business just north of Decker at 119 South Second Street and Hailey Motor Company offered Ford vehicles for sale at the opposite end of the block at 313 South Second Street.

Charles Decker, the namesake of the dealership's banner, originally relocated to Rogers in 1932 as the manager of the Texaco bulk plant. By 1935, the Rogers Democrat gave special attention to Mr. Decker's

business ventures in a story touting local development. The article reported with much enthusiasm that Mr. Decker and partner Howell Hodges were constructing a new brick building to house a garage and service station as well as an outlet for Pontiac automobiles. That same year, Decker and Howell also began handling Buicks. This structure replaced the Maple Inn Hotel, which had stood on the location for many years during Rogers' early history.

Decker continued building in the 300 block of South Second Street during the post-World War II years. The Rogers Daily News reported in 1946 that Decker purchased the property south of Decker Motor Company and razed the residential home on the lot to make room for an apartment building, which holds the distinction of being Rogers' oldest apartment house. Interestingly, the article further explained that old house was sold to Mr. John Wolf who used the salvaged materials to build another home on Highway 71.

Decker Motor Company is no longer part of the downtown business community, but the building still exists with new owners and major alterations to the structure. In 1963 Frank Van Meter and Jim Stratton purchased the dealership and continued to operate the business. By 1992 Holly Beaulieu became the owner of the building and converted it into Aunt Clyde's Bakery. The interior was remodeled and the roof over the service department was removed to accommodate a parking lot for the business. Today, the Las Palmas Mexican Restaurant is owned and operated by Clemente Reyes in the old dealership.

During his life, Charles Decker contributed a great deal of service to the Rogers community in addition to his business ventures. Pictured at right is Charles Decker in 1953. Decker served as presidents of the Chamber of Commerce as well as the Kiwanis Club during years of important change in the city. As president of the Chamber of Commerce, Decker provided leadership in the formation of the Industrial Foundation, which brought large-scale manufacturing interests such as Wendt-Sonis in 1953 and Daisy Manufacturing in 1958 to Rogers. In the 1950s, Decker also served as one of two Aldermen representing Ward 3 on the City Council. Through his service and dedication to Rogers, Charles Decker represents a community and business leader who contributed much to the city that we know today.