

1. Picture caption as on picture.
2. Picture caption: Southern Hotel, Boone and Zoe and their three children - Boone, Jr., Dorothy and Kathryn - 1954.

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Philemon Petty ~~and~~ and Nancy Steel Gillespie Cage

Philemon Petty Cage and his wife, Nancy Steel Gillespie Cage, moved to Llano from Blanco in January of 1899 with their six children. Mr. Cage opened a dry goods and notions company in February of that year. They had moved in the hope that the Llano climate would benefit Phil Cage's failing health, but he died on November 16, 1899.

After her husband's death, Nancy Cage - because of her desire to keep her family together - used the life insurance money to buy the hotel which became the historic Southern Hotel. The hotel was a stage coach stop and on the route of the cattle drives of that day. It was also a well-known stopping place for all West Texas travellers. Mrs. Cage was personally involved in the day-to-day operation of the hotel and was an excellent cook. She had a black man named Bill who was the head cook, but Nancy made all of the bread. Tradition has it that the hotel was famous for its biscuits and pies. The cook, Bill, was a great favorite of all the Cage children.

The two older Cage boys - Bayliss and DeWitt - soon left Llano and went into business in Austin. However, the four younger children - Eula, Kathryn, Leland, and Zoe - grew up in the hotel and Llano was home to the family until 1909, when Nancy Cage (Known as Nannie to many people in Llano) was no longer physically able to operate the hotel. She and the youngest daughter, Zoe, stayed in Llano for about

two years after she sold the hotel and then moved to Austin to be near her sons. Eula, Kathryn and Leland Cage graduated from high school in Llano. Kathryn married Joe McInnis of Llano and Bayliss, the oldest Cage son, married Leola Moss of Llano.

During the time the Cages were in Llano, Phil Cage was superintendant of the Methodist Sunday School and all of the family were active members of the Methodist Church. After her husband's death, Nancy was actively involved in the affairs of the town, as well as running the hotel and raising her family. She successfully combined a business, community activity, and raising a family in a day when few women would have dreamed of attempting such a thing. And she did it in such a way that she was obviously revered in the community. When she died, she was buried in Llano and the obituary from the Llano paper stated that "she was held in such high esteem that out of respect every business house in the city was closed during the funeral services"!

Zoe Cage Heep now lives in Austin and has written her memoirs. Her book contains many interesting stories of Llano at the turn of the century and of the Cage family's life in the hotel. She recalls the Ham-Ramsey Evangelists' Revival Meetings, which were an important event in the life of the town. And the first automobile in Llano, a big red Buick which was brought to town in the spring at the time of the County Fair. The fare was 25 cents to ride the car around the race track that encircled the fair grounds. Nancy Cage would not allow her children to ride in it because she thought it was too dangerous. Another exciting event was when the Wright brothers brought their airplane to Texas and many people went to see it, somewhere near Austin.

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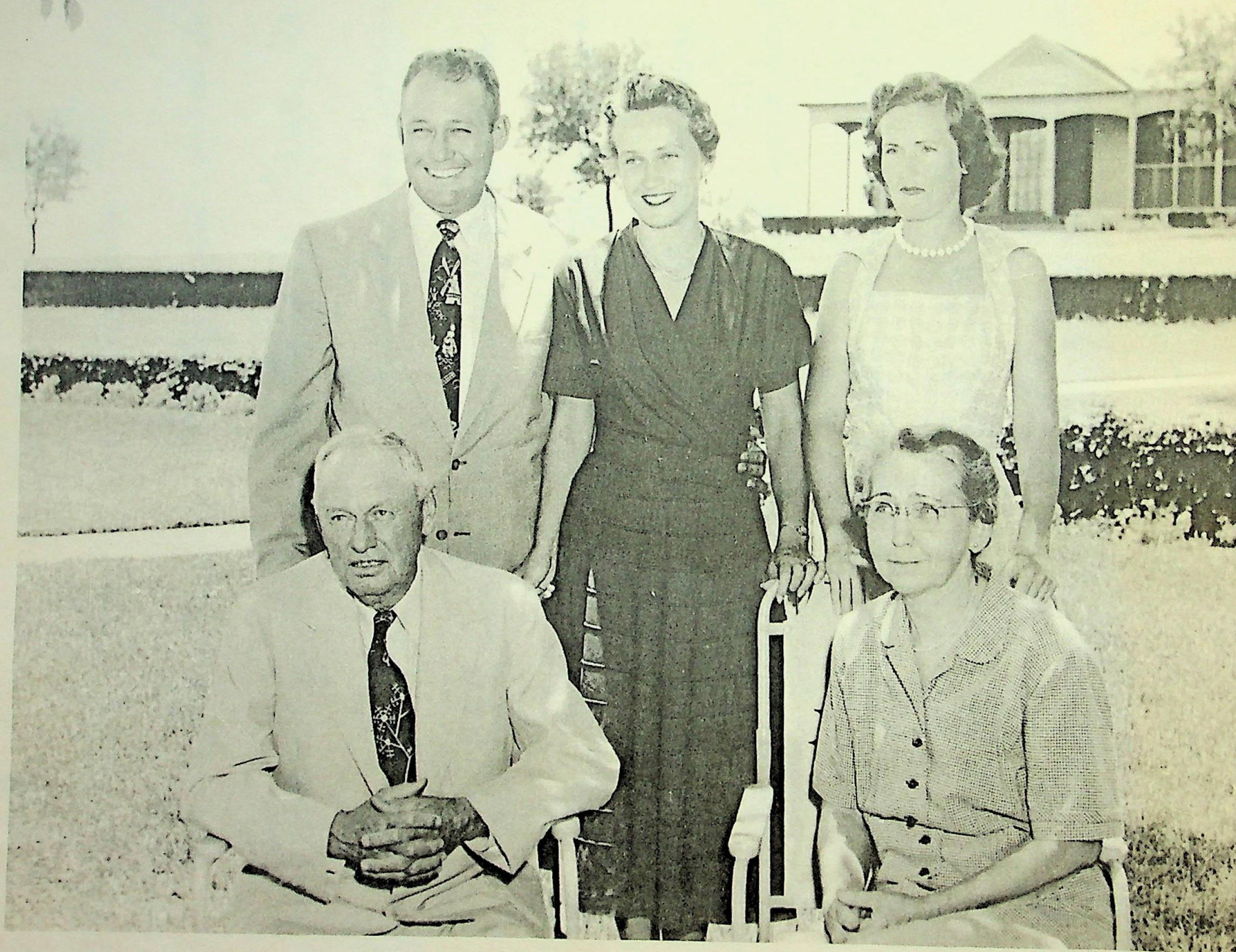
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Life in the hotel was very different from hotel life today. There was no milk delivery, so the hotel kept a cow and someone from the family or the hotel staff had to milk it everyday. The hotel had a large tin bath tub with a wooden rim, and guests made reservations to use it. The tub had only cold running water, so if anyone wanted a warm bath, water had to be heated and added. Sometimes on Saturday nights there were so many people wanting baths that the tub was not available for all of them.

The hotel had some guests who lived there permanently. Of course, the Cage children knew the people who lived at the hotel and those who came there often, like the "drummers", who were the travelling salesmen of the day. Mr. and Mrs. Appleton lived in the hotel and were almost like members of the family. Another guest who lived at the hotel was Mrs. Herd, who had the hat shop, and was very close to Nancy Cage and her family.

Zoe has fond memories of playing with Helen Oatman when they were little girls, and of walking to school with Frank Worth Roberts. Frank Worth's older sister, Lola, was dating Bill Ransom, who had the drug store in Llano. They were later married and moved to Austin, where Bill Ransom had the drug store in the Scarbrough Building for many years.

(Kathryn Cage Powers)



Boone and Zoe and their three children - Boone, Jr., Dorothy, and Kathryn - in 1954

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(Kathryn Cage Powers)