

Barnes & McCullough BUILDING CENTER

Building Relationships for Over 50 years

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Goldthwaite yard ~ 1924

Barnes & McCullough, a chain of family-owned lumber yards with deep roots in Central Texas, started in Goldthwaite in 1911, when W.P. McCullough and B.A. Harris partnered to establish the Harris and McCullough yard. Several years later Alice Barnes of Barnes Lumber Co. in Lampasas purchased Harris' interest and the company became Barnes & McCullough.

Today the chain has been shortened to two links. Many of the principals responsible for building the company through the years have died or retired. Their stories make up the history of Barnes & McCullough, that goes back nearly a century and begins with W. P. McCullough.

McCullough's father died at an early age, so he grew up in Liberty Hill with the Harris family along with the Harris son who became his first partner. During his life with the Harrises he rode the Chisholm Trail twice – at the ages of 13 and 15. On Sept. 7, 1892, he married Mary Elizabeth Ashabranner, from Williamson County. They moved to Goldthwaite in 1903. McCullough was a successful carpenter before becoming a lumberman. Ambidextrous, he could shift a hammer from one hand to the other and continue hitting nails without sacrificing any skill. In Goldthwaite, he was prominent in civic and educational endeavors, as a school trustee and city alderman. Mary was also active in the community, in her church, she knitted and taught others to knit for the Red Cross. In World War I she was county chair of the surgical dressing department, supervising the rolling and cutting of bandages.

McCullough's full name was William Proctor McCullough, but he became known to Mills County residents as "Proc" and later as "Uncle Proc." He built a house just outside the city limits with a view not only of the city but of the countryside as far as San Saba Peak. He also began purchasing land and livestock, a practice that continued throughout of his life.

The couple had four children: Herman (who died at four), Hugh, Paul, and Mary Florence. As adults, Hugh and Paul helped manage the growing business. Before joining the company, Hugh attended Howard Payne University and served in WW I, and Paul graduated from the University of Texas.



Hugh in the Military

Hugh's college days were cut short by the war, but he returned to Goldthwaite after the 1918 Armistice. The following year he married Lucille Frizzell of Goldthwaite and began work there. They had two daughters, Mary Ella, now deceased, and Norma Frances.

The company expanded in 1924 with the purchase of a yard at Hico that Hugh managed. Paul remained in Goldthwaite and married Charlotte Mingus April 25, 1935. They had one son, Michael, before her death. Paul later remarried. Mary Florence, the youngest of Mary and Proc's children, graduated from the University of Texas and became a teacher in Lampasas when the Great Depression set in. There she met and married Othel Smith. Othel became bookkeeper for Barnes Lumber Company there. Working under John Barnes (the son of Alice), Othel advanced from bookkeeper to manager -- first in Copperas Cove and then at a larger yard in Marlin.



About 1924, a group of local men "took root" around the wood stove at the lumber yard. Proc McCullough is on left behind counter.



W. P. McCullough and son Paul

In August 1942, Mary McCullough died. Othel, Mary Florence and family moved back to Goldthwaite, so Mary Florence could care for her father. Othel, also a Howard Payne alum, joined "Proc" and Paul in running the Goldthwaite yard, and Hugh continued to manage the yard at Hico.

Proc faced another tragedy in 1943 when Paul was killed by a truck while he and Othel were driving cattle. Michael, who was five, moved in with Othel, Mary Florence and their children: Mary Angeline, Florence Elizabeth, and James Proctor. Sometime after Paul's death, Proc married his late wife's sister, Sally McGowan.

The year 1946 was eventful for the business. Barnes & McCullough bought out Barnes' interests, Othel bought into the partnership, became general manager; and the chain -- which at that time had yards at Goldthwaite, Hico, Leander and Liberty Hill -- added a new link by purchasing the Stephenville yard.

With the purchase of Barnes' interests, the business became completely family-owned. Most of the yards retained the Barnes name, as it was associated with their identity. With the purchase of Stephenville, the partnership received a money-maker that has thrived through the years.

Hugh died in 1953; Lucille, became bookkeeper at Hico in 1937, and continued in that capacity.

Four years after Hugh's death, Proc, who saw his 1911 purchase grow into a chain of lumber yards, died Aug. 26, 1957, after outliving Mary and both of their sons.



O.O. Smith and W. P. McCullough in 1948

Othel, an industrious and enterprising manager, carried on the business for the next three decades. He and Lucille, who continued for years as bookkeeper at Hico, talked frequently by telephone. Lucille's career ended in 1972 when she suffered a disabling stroke. She died in 1995. Othel's middle name was Otto, and he soon acquired the nickname Double O.

In the mid-80's, his son, James Proctor Smith, joined the family business in Goldthwaite while attending Howard Payne University. Othel, Mary Florence and Jimmy purchased a yard in Llano; and another relative, John B. Samply (Mary McCullough's nephew) became its manager. The Llano yard was named Smith and McCullough.



James Proctor (Jim), became general manager around 1989 when Double O retired. In 1992, a yard was purchased at San Saba. Othel died Dec. 1, 1999, at the age of 90. Amid fluctuations of the economy and shifts in population, the partnership through the years has added, closed and changed locations of yards.

Following Othel's death, the Goldthwaite yard closed and the Llano and Hico yards sold. Hico was bought by its own manager, Mike Eply. The office and yard facilities at Goldthwaite were purchased by Mills County and serves as a courthouse annex. Merchandise from Goldthwaite was moved to San Saba and Stephenville, the remaining two links in the chain. Jim continues to serve as the general manager.



Managers have been talented and dedicated, and include **Harvey Parker**, manager of the thriving Stephenville yard since 1986. Harvey replaced another winner, Velon Reese, who was dispatched by Othel to manage the Stephenville yard in 1946 following its purchase by Barnes & McCullough. Velon died May 30, 1986.

Harvey reports that today's economy is the biggest problem the yard faces. His customer base is about 50 / 50 consumer and contractor. Builders find it harder to borrow money even though the banks have been bailed out by the government.

Tony Cantu is the manager of the San Saba location.

Barnes & McCullough has been a longtime member of LAT. Records show membership for the Goldthwaite and Hico yards dates back to 1924. Since that time the LAT convention has been a highlight of the year for Barnes and McCullough managers and their spouses.

The Barnes and McCullough yards have always emphasized quality products, whether supplying fence posts and wire for ranchers or building materials for small and large houses.