

Museum News: Bogusch Jewelry Store

By C. W. (Bill) Smith

Our citizens have experienced times of great happiness and other times of profound sadness. That is the story of life, and that is the story of Max and Gladys Bogusch. Max was the first of three jewelers who lived in Sanderson during its history, and it was an exemplary life.

Max George Bogusch was born May 11, 1889, in Llano County, Texas, to Auguste Wilhelmina Rossberg Bogusch and Karl Joseph Bogusch. He was the sixth of eight children. His mother was born in Germany and immigrated to the US from Prussia in 1868. His father was born in Austria and immigrated to Castell, Texas, in 1873. The Bogusch family eventually settled in Mason, Texas, where they lived for many years.

While living in Mason Max met Gladys Alexander, who was born in Bastrop County, Texas, and they married in 1909. Their son Roy was born there in 1910 and they stayed until about 1915. At that time, they decided to move west to Terrell County to a railroad boomtown that was growing by leaps and bounds...Sanderson, Texas. Max was a jeweler and watch repairman by trade and Sanderson did not have a jewelry store. With lots of railroad and ranching money floating around, it seemed like a good place to open a business.

The first Bogusch Jewelry Store was in a small, frame building on Oak Street, next to the large McLymont Drug Store. Most of the businesses in town were located along Downie, one block to the south of Oak, but shrewd businessmen felt that Oak would be the main business street in the near future. Deciding that he needed to be closer to the railroad depot, Bogusch purchased property in the middle of the block between Downie and Oak on Persimmon Street and had a two-story brick building constructed in 1917. That was the year that a terrible fire consumed most of the buildings on the western half of that block, and besides his new jewelry store, the St. Francis Hotel was also constructed. Across the street the Kerr Hotel was also begun, and the area was quite busy. Bogusch's store had living quarters upstairs and was the perfect place for his growing family, which by 1920 had added a second son, Jack.

The next few years flew by quickly as Bogusch built up a solid client-base. His sons were flourishing in the Sanderson schools, Gladys was happy, and life was good.

Max and Gladys joined First Presbyterian Church in Sanderson and he was a member and past master of the Sanderson Masonic Lodge. They were great supporters of their children's activities in the school system and sports teams. Gladys served on many committees and especially worked for the Red Cross

In 1927 Roy graduated from Sanderson High School and got a job with the railroad. In 1929 he was married in Brewster County, Texas and he and his wife, Grace Nevill, were living with the Boguschs. In 1931 he went into partnership with Fred Charlton as co-manager of the Humble Filling Station at Wilson and Oak. His marriage failed and eventually he married a second time to Carol Ferguson and they had two boys. He would spend his last years as a conductor on the railroad, passing away in 1966.

In 1937 Jack graduated with honors from SHS as valedictorian of his class. His excellent grades and leadership abilities won him an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, from which he graduated in 1942. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the United States Army and went to the Army Air Forces Advanced Flying School. During that time, he married his sweetheart, Dorothy Vogeley. He received his silver wings as a flight officer in December 1943, was promoted to captain and left for the European theater in January of 1944.

Stationed at an airbase in England as the 753rd Operations Officer, on March 6, 1944 Jack was ordered to take the place of the captain of a B-24 on a bombing mission in Germany. The captain was ill and could not make the trip. Their target was the Daimler-Benz Motor Works in Berlin. Being in the second ship of the lead squadron, they met



JACK L. BOGUSCH

no resistance until they were over Berlin. Due to problems with the lead plane, the run was aborted and a second run over the same target was ordered. This time Bogusch's ship took heavy flack and fire from attack craft, losing three engines. With only one operative engine the plane began to fall, and the bail-out signal was given. Captain Bogusch elected to remain with his ship to try and give the men as much time to leave as possible. In the ensuing crash, he was killed, along with three crewmates. Six crewmates made it safely to the ground but were rounded up by Germans and spent the remainder of the war in German POW camps. Bogusch and his comrades were buried at the Catholic cemetery in Albergen, Holland, which was German-held territory. After the war his remains were repatriated to the US and he is buried at Gooch Cemetery in Mason, Texas.

Max, Gladys and the family were devastated at the news of Jack's death. The worst fear of a family is a loss of its children, and Jack's bright star and hope for a successful future were instantly denied to them. Life would never be the same again.

In 1947, at almost 60 years of age, Max and Gladys decided it was time to sell out and retire. They had plans to move to Lake Walk at Del Rio and live out their years. They found a buyer for their store, Charles Riggins, the deal was cut, the papers signed and in 1948 they moved to Del Rio.

Their remaining years were as happy as could be expected, with declining health issues. On January 5, 1956, Max suffered a heart attack and died. He was buried at Jack's side at Gooch Cemetery in Mason.

Gladys moved back to Sanderson for a while where Roy and her grandsons lived, but eventually moved to San Antonio. She passed away in 1970 and is also buried with her family at Mason.

Max and Gladys Bogusch have a solid place in Sanderson history as having created the first jewelry store in town. They had a thriving business, built up a strong core of customers and were good neighbors and good citizens. They could be counted on to do what was necessary to promote the town and make it a better place to live. We need citizens like that today.