



T. B. BAKER AND THE BAKER HOTEL

T. B. Baker was born on July 11, 1875 in Washington, Iowa to William Abner Baker and Luranah Grayson Baker. T. B. was a single man of 25 in the 1900 census and was living with his parents in Eureka, Kansas, managing a hotel. He ventured much further into the hotel business over time.

Baker had married the former Mabel "Mae" Crawley in 1902 in Miami, Oklahoma, her home town. A brief newspaper article noted that it was a small wedding at the home of the bride's sister Lucy. Thereafter, T. B. and his wife were running the Greenwood Hotel in Eureka, Kansas. In October of that year, he was named manager of the Kingfisher Hotel in Kingfisher, Oklahoma. The local newspaper posted an article when his appointment was announced, adding that the hotel was in the process of being renovated and remodeled.

The couple had relocated to San Antonio by about 1917. After a few years, Baker began to manage hotels for his own account. He owned and operated three properties in San Antonio. The St. Anthony Hotel was his first. Another was the famous Menger Hotel on Alamo Plaza, said to be the oldest continuously operating hotel west of the Mississippi River. Located adjacent to the Alamo, it has been a popular and historic destination for more than 170 years. The third was the Gunter Hotel. All three of these hotels are still standing and in operation today.

Baker later built two hotels that were named for him. The first was in downtown Dallas and the second was in Mineral Wells. The hotel in Dallas was at the corner of Commerce and Akard streets. Baker bought the property and the former structure was demolished in 1924.

Construction of the new hotel began later that year. The features of the Baker Hotel were: 18 floors, 700 rooms, a convention hall that could accommodate 1,700 people, a roof garden that could seat 2,100. It was a popular location for downtown visitors, weddings, conventions and other gatherings. Radio station WFAA once had its broadcast studio there and future president Richard M. Nixon stayed there in 1963. The hotel operated for about 50 years at that location until it was acquired by a utility company, blocking up properties for a headquarters building. It stood until June of 1980 when it was demolished.

Like other companies, the owners were affected by the Great Depression. A newspaper article on February 28, 1934 referenced a bankruptcy proceeding against the hotel company in connection with a lien held by a trustee in Chicago, Illinois. It was to have forced a sale of the Dallas hotel. In January, 1935 a newspaper article was published about a proposed plan of reorganization of the company. Further details are not available, but a reorganization plan appears to have been accepted by the court. The Dallas hotel appears to have remained in the hands of the hotel company until it was sold many years later.



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