Architecture
By Merrell

Roosevelt County Court House (1939)
Contractor: G. S. Lambie
Cost: $400,000.00

Citizens Bank (1957)
Tucumcari, New Mexico
Contractor: Currell & Neale
Cost: $47,000.00

Socorro General Hospital (1957)
Contractor: John C. Cornell
Cost: $350,000.00
Profile of an Architect: Robert E. Merrell

Robert E. Merrell, of the Clovis architectural firm of Schaefer, Merrell and Pendleton, can say he saw the promise of New Mexico before most present-day New Mexicans did. Mr. Merrell came to New Mexico in 1931 as Supervisory Architect for the Southern Nationals Hotel Co. of Galveston on the construction of the Hotel Clovis. When the job was completed, Merrell stayed in Clovis and established his own architectural firm under the name of Robert E. Merrell, Architect.

Mr. Merrell was born in May, 1895, at Keller, Texas, near Ft. Worth. He received a B.S. degree in architecture from Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1919, and his M.A. in Architecture at the same school in 1921. Following graduation, he worked for three months in Europe, making restoration drawings for historical buildings at Rheims and Verdun under the direction of French architects. He spent another four months in travel and study in Europe before returning to the United States.

"My first architectural job was in the offices of the college architect of Texas A&M," Merrell said. He gained practical experience by working as a draftsman in the office of Saninet, Staats and Hedrick, Architects and Engineers, Ft. Worth, for five years, and spent another four years in the offices of Steinman & Son and Livesay & Weideman, Architects, in Beaumont, Texas.

After opening his own office in Clovis, Mr. Merrell did a junior high school building, the Curry County Courthouse and jail, and Memorial Hospital in Clovis; Eugene Mann School, an addition to a junior high school and an elementary school, the Roosevelt County Courthouse and jail, in Portales; and two women's dormitories, the Aviation Building and the Student Union Building at New Mexico State College.

Mr. Merrell was registered as an Architect in New Mexico in 1934, the year that the registration law became effective, and served on the State Board of Architectural Examiners from 1938 through 1944.

Mr. Merrell formed the firm of Schaefer and Merrell with Jerry M. Schaefer in 1944, and the firm was reorganized to admit Warren F. Pendleton as a partner in 1953.

The firm of Schaefer, Merrell and Pendleton has worked on many projects throughout New Mexico, including schools at Gallup and Lovington, high schools in Eunice and Lords-

(Continued on Page 20)
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Profile: Merrell

burg, an elementary school at Truth or Consequences, and the Roosevelt County Hospital at Portales. More recent work of the firm includes the Mimbres Memorial Hospital at Deming and the Socorro General Hospital at Socorro; and school construction including the Administration Building, Library Building, Stadium and Memorial Tower at New Mexico A&M College; and buildings at Eastern New Mexico University at Portales.

Works presently underway include a new men's dormitory at the University of New Mexico; the Natatorium at Eastern New Mexico University; school work at Lovington; and the Mimbres Valley Bank at Deming.

Mr. Merrell married Bille Eloise Beard May 16, 1925, at Ft. Worth. They live at 1401 Axtell Street in Clovis.

"I have served on one or two committees for the New Mexico Chapter of AIA," Merrell said, "but mostly I have been an 'Indian,' not chief."

Mr. Merrell has been a "chief" in bringing structural beauty to the New Mexico scene. His Roosevelt County Courthouse, shown on page 6, retains the massiveness of most such structures, but avoids the pseudo-classical construction cliches associated with such buildings. His Socorro General Hospital is simple and functional, with the beauty inherent in simplicity. The other building produced by Mr. Merrell are testimonials to the breadth of his imagination and the consistency of his artistic taste.

Robert E. Merrell has given New Mexico the benefit of his ability and experience for 28 years. Whatever rewards he has received he has earned.

Architecture is not a question of dimensions, but of proportions. It is a beautiful and serious game of space.—Willen Dudok.

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