

# The Bandera PROPHECY

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Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas  
The Bandera Prophet

On this day in 1918, J. Marvin Leonard, "Mr. Marvin," opened his first store in Fort Worth.

Leonard was born in 1895 near Linden, Texas. During World War I he moved to Dallas, where he worked in a store that specialized in salvaged merchandise.

In 1918, he moved west to Fort Worth and opened a store in which his brother, Obadiah, joined him the next year. Leonard Brothers prospered and rapidly expanded beyond its original offering of groceries and salvaged merchandise.

Marvin Leonard used extensive advertising, eye-catching events, and a commitment to low profit margin and high volume to turn the firm into the largest retail establishment in Fort Worth. Obadiah, known as "Mr. Obie," was in charge of store operations at Leonard Brothers. In this role he participated in the design, construction, and renovation of a store that eventually sprawled over nine acres of downtown Fort Worth.

By the 1930s, Leonard Brothers dominated retailing in the Fort Worth area. Obadiah Leonard purchased his brother's interest in the store in 1965 and sold Leonard Brothers to Charles David Tandy in 1967. On March 4, 1974, Tandy sold Leonard Brothers to Dillards, and the Leonards' name came down from the stores.