

# The Bandera PROPHEET

April 9, 2024

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas  
The Bandera Prophet

On this day in 1895, Howard Edward Butt was born in Memphis, Tenn. While he was a child, his family moved to Kerrville, because of his father's tuberculosis.

His mother, Florence Butt, opened a small grocery store there in 1905; Howard became manager of the store at the age of sixteen, and was the valedictorian of his class at Tivy High School in 1914. After serving in the navy during World War I, Butt returned to Kerrville, and in 1921 made the then-daring decision to operate on a cash-and-carry basis, rather than the customary charge and deliver.

After several failed attempts to expand, he opened a successful store in Del Rio in 1926 and bought three more stores in the Rio Grande valley in 1928. He opened stores in Corpus Christi in 1931, Austin in 1938, and San Antonio in 1942.

In 1946, he changed his company's name to H-E-B. At the time of his death, in 1991, there were more than 170 H-E-B supermarkets, and by the end of the 20th century, H-E-B was the largest privately owned grocery chain in the nation.