

A native Texan Virgil Powell was born to Leonadus Polk (LP) and Essie Vaughn Powell in Ft. Worth, Texas on February 9, 1899. At that time the family was ranching in the Midland area. Virgil and his sister Faye would attend school in Ft. Worth and over the summer the family would go to the ranch.

In 1914, Virgil's father LP went into the Rambouillet sheep business. Shortly after, the family moved to New Mexico where they homesteaded property for ownership then sold them as ranches. In time, the family became weary of the harsh and cold conditions in New Mexico and in 1918, one of the coldest years on record in that state, the family decided to move back to Texas.

Virgil left New Mexico Military Institute where he was attending school to help care for the sheep while LP went to Texas to find property for them. While LP was in Texas, blizzard conditions developed in New Mexico. Bonfires were built to warm the sheep and keep them from freezing. The sheep huddled so close to the fire that their wool singed turning it black. LP found property in Big Lake and summoned Virgil to come with the sheep. By the time Virgil was able to herd the sheep to the train for transport to Big Lake, he had a load of black sheep that became a sensation in West Texas. People came from around the area to see the "black Rambouillet" sheep.

Virgil and LP eventually developed ranching properties in the counties of Crockett, Menard, Reagan, San Saba, Schleicher, Sutton, Tom Green, & Upton. The property in Crockett County which the Powells called The Ranch at Big Lake, has the historical designation of being the first property to have a producing oil well in Crockett County.

In 1928 Virgil married Johnnie Dell White. Together they had 3 children, a son Jimmie and twin daughters, Marolyn and Madolyn. Their faith and church were very important to the Powells and informed their

personal values and business principles which have been taught to each generation: Help your neighbors, be honest, stick to your word, don't back out, finish what you start. Virgil modeled these values and principles for his family through his hard work and dedication to his family and community.

Virgil was dedicated to serving in capacities that would further the growth and strength of the agricultural community. During his lifetime, he was active in the National Wool Growers Association, he served as the president of the West Texas Wool & Mohair Association, president of the American Rambouillet Association and director and president of the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association where in 1973, he was presented with the Fred Earwood Memorial Award for outstanding service to the sheep industry by that association. He was also active in the Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association and served on the board of directors of the Texas Hereford Association, where in 1980 he was presented with an honorary life membership.

The vitality and prosperity of the community of San Angelo was also very important to Virgil. He served as director of the San Angelo Board of City Development and was on the Ration Board during World War II. As a businessman, interested in the economic success of the area, he served as board member and president of the First National Bank of Mertzon, director of the Texas Production Credit Association and as a board member of the San Angelo National Bank which later became the Texas Commerce Bank and ultimately the JP Morgan Chase Bank. Virgil was also a sports fan and served as director of the San Angelo Colts Baseball Team.