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An ad from the Oct. 17, 1959, Southwest Daily Times by Ideal Food Store highlights such items as 2-pounds of thick-sliced bacon for just 79 cents and a free gift of a 5-pound bag of sugar if you spend more than \$15 while at the store. A 5-pound bag of flour is only 43 cents and a ready-to-eat picnic ham is just 29 cents a pound. Ideal Grocery founder James Blakemore's son, Jim Blakemore Jr., will be speaking at the Ideal Grocery exhibit opening from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday at the Coronado Museum. Mr. Blakemore is a Liberal native who now resides in Phoenix. Drop by the Coronado Sunday and enjoy the ice cream social sponsored by the Seward County Historical Society. L&T photo/Larry Phillips

By J. BASIL DANNEBOHM

- Special to the Leader & Times

The Seward County Historical Society will host an ice cream social from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday. The event will serve as the opening reception for the museum's new exhibit showcasing the history of the Ideal Grocery store chain.

"It's the story of how a young man worked hard and became one of the most successful Americans of his time," said JoAnne Mansell, Executive Director of the Seward County Historical Society.

James A. Blakemore, Sr., regarded by many as one of the inventors of the modern supermarket, was the co-founder of the Blakemore Bros. Grocery Co., a supermarket chain with its origins in Liberal.

In 1919, Mr. (Jim) Blakemore moved to Liberal where he worked with his brother, Tom, in the J. E. George Grocery Co. One year later, the Blakemore brothers purchased the store from George and in 1921, their brother, Shelby, joined them in the grocery business.

The business was incorporated as the Blakemore Bros. Grocery Co. in 1929.

On Sept. 12, 1960, the company merged with ACF Wrigley out of Detroit, Mich. and continued operating as the Ideal Division of ACF Wrigley, Inc.

"The exhibit aims to celebrate the work of the Blakemore brothers and their legacy not only in Liberal but southwest Kansas, Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle. This is really an exhibit with regional appeal," Mansell said.

James Blakemore's son, Jim Blakemore Jr., will be speaking at approximately 3 p.m. Mr.

Blakemore is a Liberal native who now resides in Phoenix.

Over the course of his career, Blakemore worked in real estate, ranching, oil and gas, automotive and the storage businesses.

The exhibit, which runs through August, will feature a diverse selection of memorabilia from the grocery store's history.

Following the opening reception, at 5 p.m., the annual meeting of the Seward County Historical Society will convene at the museum.

For more information, call 624-7624.

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