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GREGG COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
417 Moberly Avenue
Longview, Texas 75602
214-757-2261

The Spring Hill Story

THE EARLY YEARS

1887--1932

Spring Hill School had its beginning in 1887 in a one-room building on a site about a mile south of the present location with 65 students enrolled. In 1897 a new frame two-story building was erected where the Elmira Chapel Presbyterian Church now stands. The first floor was used for church, and the second floor was used for public school.

Mr. J. R. Castleberry donated 35 acres of land and materials for the building. Later the church deeded two acres of the land to the school.

The first teacher was Jim Christian. Other teachers who succeeded him in the one-teacher school were Adolphus Pace, W. E. Alexander, Miss Annie Rains, L. A. Roddon, Mr. King, Miss Effie Daniels, and Miss Mottie Sutherland. Three men who served as trustees of the early school were Dennis Magrill, A. E. Castleberry, and J. H. Alexander.

In 1915 a new two-room building was constructed, and Misses Nettie and Nannie Crane were employed. From 1931 to 1933 two frame buildings were used to take care of the fast increasing population of the community.

THE OIL BOOM

1933--1950

A brick building, consisting of eight classrooms, a kitchen, a gymnasium, and an auditorium, was built in 1933. At that time seven grades were provided, and two buses transported the high school students to Longview High School. Mr. W. A. Hearne, the first superintendent, was in charge during this period of time.

In 1934 an eleven-room brick teacherage was completed on the campus. Grades were added, one each year, until 1940-41 when Spring Hill was classified as a four-year high school. The second floor, containing a band room and homemaking department, was added in 1936. The cafeteria was also added in 1936, a shop building in 1940, and a library in 1941. Later additions included a football stadium and an athletic field house.

The kindergarten building was built during the 1949-50 school year. It consisted of one large room and a restroom for kindergarten use and a choir room for the music program.

The year 1950 saw a new cafeteria, gymnasium (which is now the Middle School Gym) and swimming pool added to the plant.

GROWTH AND EXPANSION

1951--Present

After the frame shop building burned in 1962, a shop, band hall, and three science rooms were built and put into use in 1963. That year also saw the voters of the district vote to change the school from a common school district to an independent school district.

A high school wing and administrative offices (now the Junior High School) were completed in 1968. At the same time, the old elementary building was remodeled and air-conditioned.

The junior high building (now the Middle School), running track, and gymnasium-band hall-auditorium complex were begun in 1973. These facilities were put into use in 1975.

The present high school and the administration building were completed in 1981. At the same time, 12 classrooms, a music room, learning center, office area, and restrooms were added to the old elementary building. The baseball field and tennis courts were also completed during this time.

A new wing was added to the junior high in 1983 in order to move the sixth grade into the junior high program. It included nine classrooms, restrooms, and storage areas.

STATISTICS

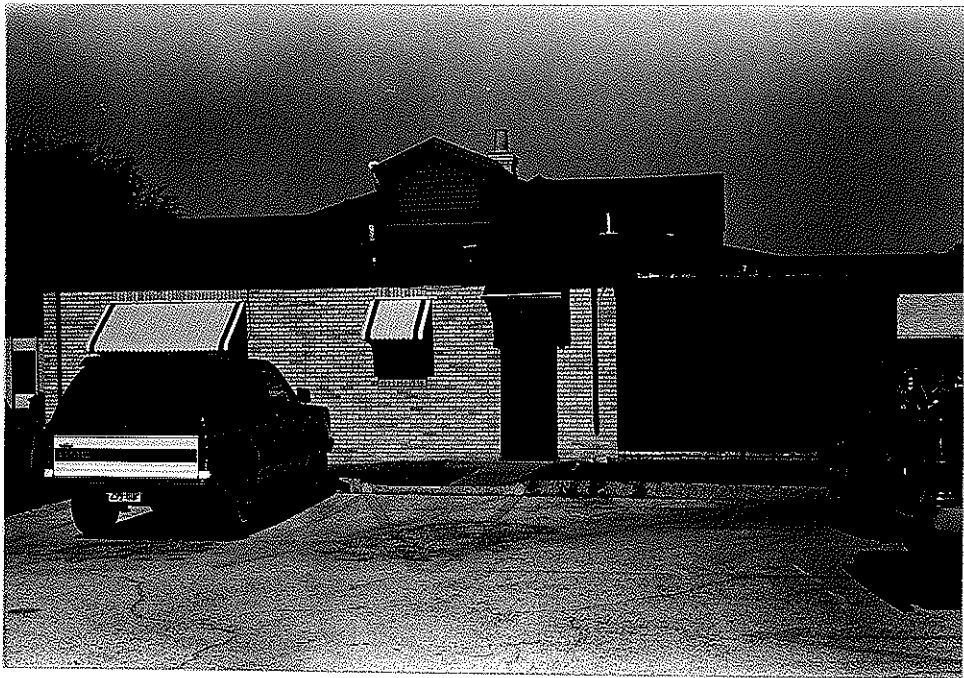
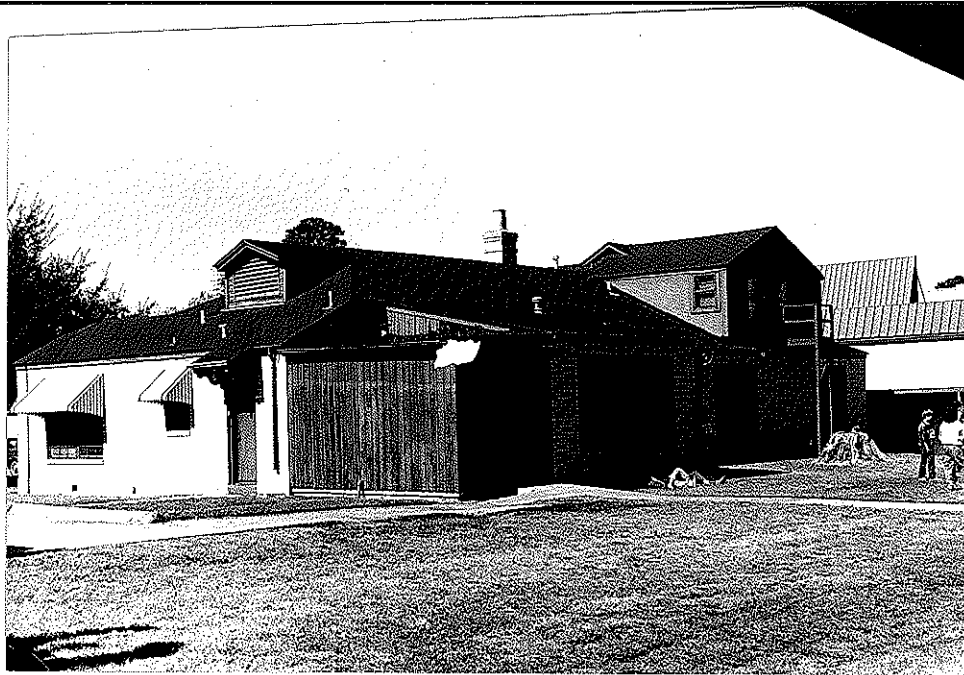
1987

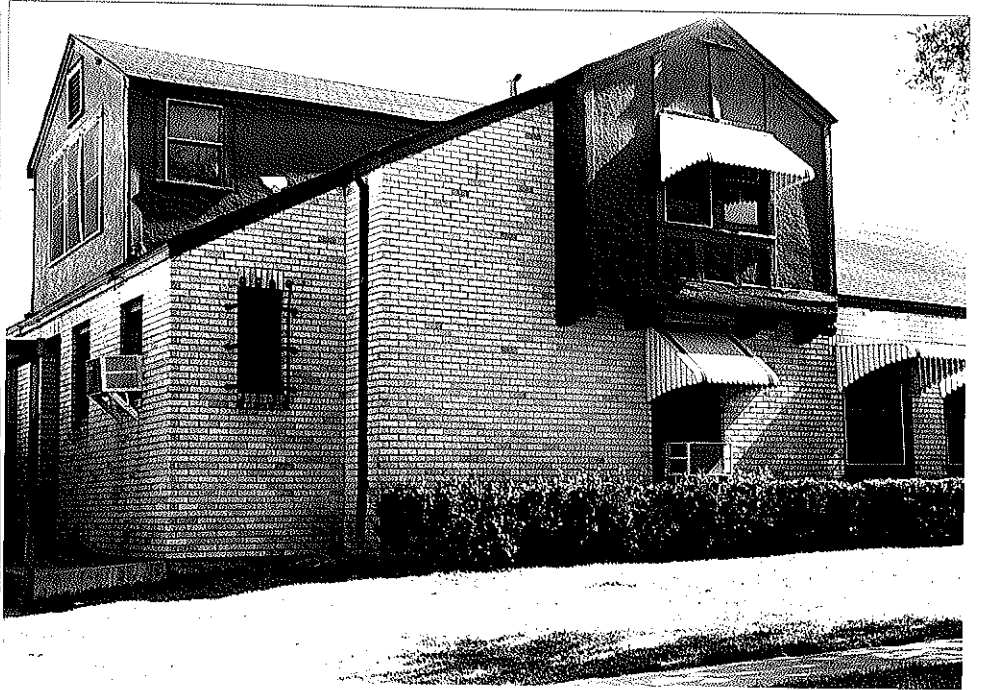
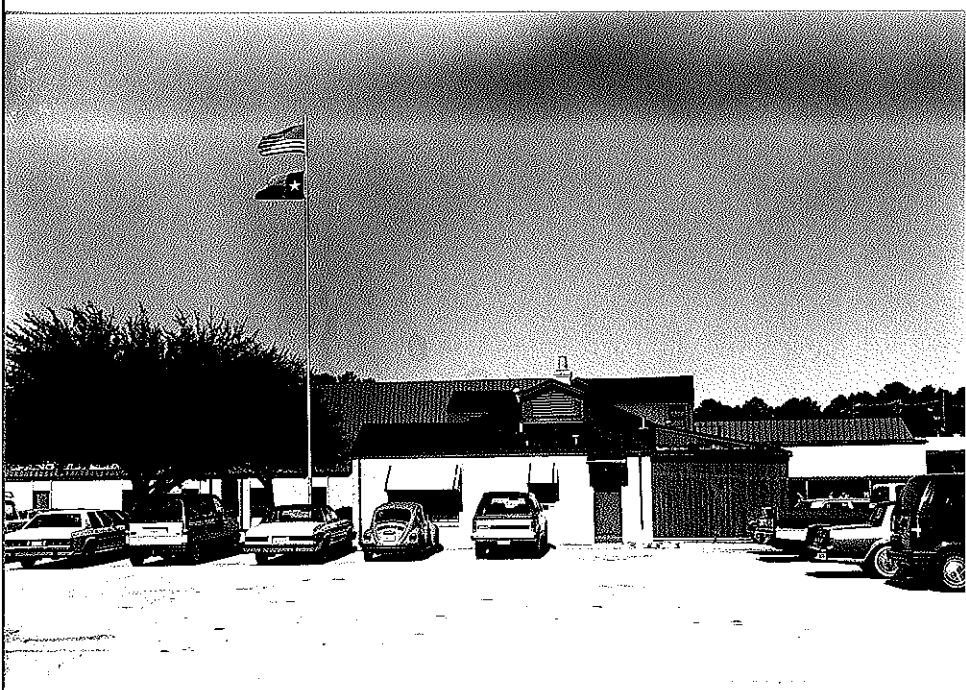
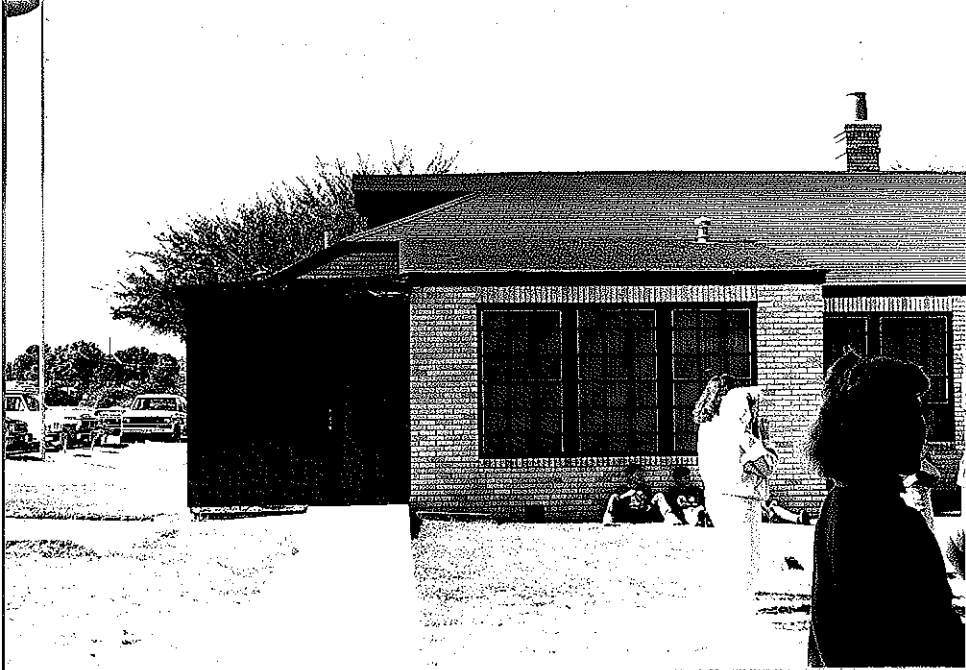
Total school enrollment for the 1987-88 year has increased to 1,318 students. The staff includes 7 administrators, 97 teachers, 14 secretaries and aides, and 45 auxiliary personnel.

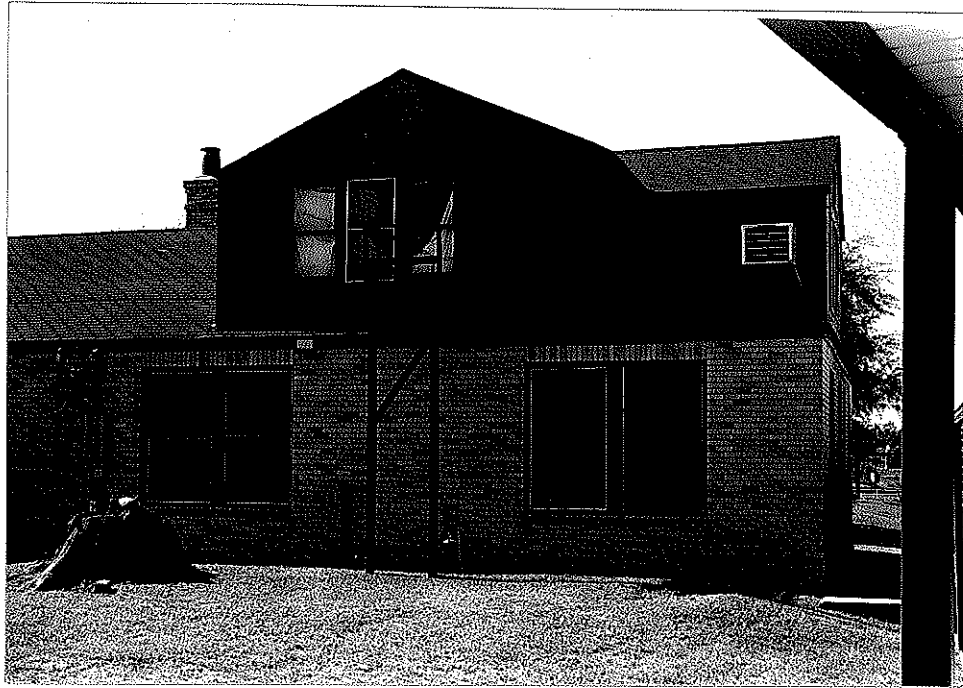
The present school plant covers 40 acres and is divided into four sections: Elementary School--grades pre-kindergarten through third, Middle School--grades four and five, Junior High School--grades six through eight, and High School--grades nine through twelve. Two cafeterias are operated to feed approximately 950 students and faculty. In addition, the cafeteria prepares breakfast daily for 100. Eight bus routes operate morning and afternoon to transport the students to and from school.

The latest technology is in place at Spring Hill School with the implementation of the I. B. M. "Writing to Read" program in the elementary, the expansion of the computer programs in the junior high and high school, and the advanced courses offered to high school students in science, math, and foreign language.

The district is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is ranked in the top two per cent in the state TEAMS testing program.







THE SPRING HILL TEACHERAGE
LONGVIEW, GREGG COUNTY, TEXAS

10488

When the oil boom came with the discovery of what became the giant East Texas Oil Field in 1930 - 1931 the rural schools had the special problem of transporting or housing the growing number of teachers. Spring Hill was a rural community with no facilities for housing teachers. Longview, seven miles distant, was the nearest town. Also, this was a common school district which required the faculty to reside within the boundaries of the district.¹

The board of trustees decided to solve this housing problem by constructing a teacherage on the campus. This building was completed in 1933 and was immediately occupied.²

A store-room was made from an open porch on the South-east corner in the Fall of 1940.³

On the very cold December 15, 1940 an over-heated gas wall heater set fire to the building. Four firemen came from Longview to assist in extinguishing the fire.²

In 1942 Mr. V. M. Nipper, the superintendent, converted the store-room to a bedroom for his son, Jimmy.³

The second story was added in the Fall of 1943 when Joel H. Ward served as superintendent.⁴

By the 1950's most of the teachers had left the teacherage. Mr. R. G. Hensley became superintendent in 1950 and he and his family moved into the upstairs portion of the building. Six to eight single women teachers lived in the downstairs part. When the Hensleys moved out in 1965 only Miss Anne Davis lived in the teacherage.^{1, 2, 3} Mr. L. L. Williamson, who came to the system in 1939 as principal, later as superentendent, moved into the teacherage in 1965.³

The common school district became Spring Hill Independent School District in 1963.² By this time housing was readily available nearby; many teachers were married, and when, in 1967 Miss Davis moved out there was little use for the eleven-room teacherage.¹

At the present time (November 1987) the North half of the downstairs is occupied by special education and the South half by the school nurse. The upstairs is used for storage.

The Spring Hill teacherage remains an ediface representative of a period of history when necessity dictated a practical solution to a problem and one which, still in good condition, is being retained as a very useful and unique structure.

REFERENCES

1. Hensley, R. G.: transcript from personal communication to Tramel, Christene; Nov. 20, 1987.
2. Board Minutes, Spring Hill Common School and Independent School Districts.

3. Williamson, L. L.: personal communication, Nov. 20, 1987.
4. Ward, Joel H.: personal communication, Nov. 20, 1987.

For additional references, see:

The History of Gregg County: Longview Junior Chamber of Commerce; pub. Ft. Worth, 1957.

The Spring Hill Story: pamphlet pub. by Spring Hill Independent School District, 1987.

Reprint requests to:

Norman W. Black, D.D.S.,
Chairman, Gregg County
Historical Commission
417 Mobberly Ave.
Longview, TX 75602

November 25, 1987



First Faculty to live in Spring Hill Teacherage
This is first faculty of New Building of 1933

From left to right
Mr Jim Davis } Trustees
Mrs Sam Rundell }
Mr R K Johnson }
Margaret Lowe
Elizabeth (Wise) Scott
Elizabeth (Bailey) Nichols
Rachel (Faulkner) La Rue
Hazel Hunt
~~Katherine Handcock~~
Mr W A Hearne (Supt)
Verna Smith
Katherine Handcock
Mamie Watson
Dimple (Edwards) Hutchings
Hardy Hunt

Donated to Spring Hill Lib

GREGG COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

417 Mobberly Avenue
Longview, Texas 75602
214-757-2261

Telephone notes from Mr. R. G. Hensley:

Mr. Hensley came to Spring Hill ISD in 1945 as the high school principal.

Mr. Hensley became superintendent and moved into the teacherage in 1950. He and his family, wife Kathleen, son Jerry, and daughter Barbara, lived there for a period of fifteen years, until 1965.

Mr. Hensley said that in 1950 when his family moved into the teacherage, there were no teachers living in the upstairs section of the other side of the teacherage. He remembers there being approximately six-eight single women teachers living in the downstairs part.

After about five-six years, the number of teachers living there had dropped to about three-four.

He thinks that in the early 1960's Miss Anne Davis lived alone. Later there was another lady who lived there with Miss Davis for a short time. At the time Mr. Hensley moved in 1965, Miss Davis was the only one living in the single teachers' half of the building. After leaving Spring Hill ISD, the Hensleys moved away from Longview for a period of time, and he does not know any details (dates, occupants, etc.) on a first-hand basis about the teacherage.

Mr. Hensley noted that when the teacherage was built, and for many years later, the district's policy was that the personnel must live in the district. Hence, there was a big need to provide housing for the single women teachers. As more homes were built in Spring Hill and more married teachers were hired, the need was not so great to have the housing available. He said these facts explain why, in the beginning, there were so many living in the teacherage and toward the end of the 1960's and the early 1970's, there was not a need at all.

Mr. Hensley also believes that the second story was added to the teacherage while Mr. Joel Ward was superintendent.

GREGG COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

417 Mobberly Avenue
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Notes from Board Minutes:

(The earliest board minutes located, so far, was the minutes for the May 6, 1940, meeting.)

On October 7, 1940, the trustees voted to insure the contents of the teacherage for \$2,000.00

In the December 18, 1940, minutes there was reference made to a fire in the teacherage the previous Sunday afternoon (which would have been December 15, 1940.)

In the January 3, 1941, minutes the trustees voted to send \$20.00 to the Longview Fire Department in appreciation for the four firemen who responded to the teacherage fire on December 15, 1940.

In the June 28, 1940, minutes reference was made to a gas leak at the teacherage being repaired.

Additional notes:

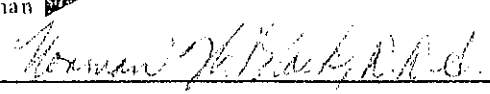
It is generally believed that the teacherage was completed in either 1933 or 1934.

Spring Hill Schools became an independent school district in 1963.



APPLICATION FORM FOR OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

Texas Historical Commission
History Division
P.O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711

Title of Marker (subject to revision by THC staff) ▶ SPRING HILL SCHOOL TEACHERAGE	County ▶ GREGG
Marker Location (from nearest town on state map) ▶ One-tenth mile East of State Highway 300 on Spring Hill Cut-off Road. 4.6 miles North of U. S. Highway 80. Longview, Gregg Co.	
Distance and direction of subject from marker site ▶ Building Marker	If not on post, type of surface to which marker ▶ Brick will be attached (wood, stone, etc.)
Owner of Marker Site ▶ SPRING HILL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	Address City, Zip Route 8, Box 33, Longview, Texas 75605
Sponsor of Marker ▶ Dr. Norman W. Black, Chairman Gregg County Historical Commission	Address City, Zip 417 Mobberly Ave. Longview, Texas 75602
Signature of County Chairman ▶ 	Address City, Zip 417 Mobberly Ave. Longview, TX 75602 (214) 757-2261
Person to whom marker is to be shipped* ▶ MR. MIKE CROSSLAND	Address City, Zip Route 8, Box 33 Longview, Texas 75605

**NOTE: Freight companies cannot ship to route or box numbers. If street address is unavailable, please provide a phone number. If marker is to be placed on highway right-of-way, it will be shipped to your district highway engineer.*

Please consult the back of this page for specifications of the markers available. Check the items desired below. Approval of the application and narrative *must* be obtained from the county historical commission, as indicated by the county chairman's signature on this form, before forwarding the material to the Texas Historical Commission. Please *do not* send payment by ordering subject or building markers; funds will be requested once the application has been approved by the State Marker Committee. Sales tax of 6% must be added to the price, except if purchased by a tax-exempt organization. Applicants may order a marker with a socket to attach to their own post; however, the cost is the same as a marker furnished with a foundry post.

SUBJECT MARKERS

- | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) . . . | \$225 | With tax
\$238.78 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" subject marker with post | \$650 | \$689.81 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" subject marker without post | \$600 | \$636.75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" subject marker with post | \$375 | \$397.97 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" subject marker without post | \$300 | \$318.38 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I(We) request that RTHL designation be considered for this marker. | | |

BUILDING MARKERS

- | | | |
|--|-------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" building marker with post | \$350 | With tax
\$371.45 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" building marker without post | \$300 | \$318.38 |
- Applications for building markers will automatically be considered for the RTHL designation. Please read carefully Texas Marker Policies 13 through 18, and indicate that you have done so by signing below.

Signature of owner _____

PAPERWEIGHTS

Please indicate quantity desired.

- | | | |
|---|------|---------------------|
| _____ 3" x 4" plastic paperweight
mounted with replica of marker | \$90 | With tax
\$95.51 |
| <i>Allow two months from completion of marker for receipt of paperweight.</i> | | |
| _____ Medallion paperweight | \$40 | \$42.45 |
| <i>Allows four lines of engraving; please indicate desired wording.</i> | | |

DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

Please indicate quantity desired and give location(s) on form above:

- | | | |
|---|------|---------------------|
| 24" x 24" Historical Markers In City sign | \$80 | With tax
\$84.90 |
| <i>These will be shipped to and placed on your town's city limits signs by the District Highway Engineer.</i> | | |
| ___ Black and White (for farm-to-market roads, state and U.S. highways) | | |
| ___ Green and White (for interstate highways) | | |
| 18" x 22" Historical Marker directional sign | \$80 | \$84.90 |
| <i>In black and white only. For city and county roads.</i> | | |
| <i>Applicant must supply post and be responsible for placement.</i> | | |
| ___ With arrow pointing straight ahead | | |
| ___ With arrow pointing left | | |
| ___ With arrow pointing right | | |

OTHER

- | | | |
|--|-------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Register plaque | \$ 50 | With tax
\$ 53.06 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12" x 6" supplemental plate | \$110 | \$116.74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" building marker plate only
(see policy #15) | \$190 | \$201.64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement medallion (see policy #15) | \$110 | \$116.74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze stars (for replacement on 1936
granite markers) | \$ 25 | \$ 27.14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze wreaths (for replacement on
1936 granite markers) | \$ 25 | \$ 27.14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze seals (for replacement on
1936 granite markers) | \$ 65 | \$ 68.98 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze plates (for replacement on
1936 granite markers) | \$185 | \$196.33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Certificates of commendation | | 50¢ each |

SHISD to celebrate 100th anniversary

By RELICIA L. JONES
Staff Writer

The Spring Hill Independent School District is about to celebrate its 100th anniversary, and those associated with the district say it still holds to that strong will to survive with which it began in 1887.

To mark the occasion, a number of activities have been planned for Friday and Saturday, school officials said.

On a site one mile south of the present location, the school had its beginning in a rural northern Gregg County one-room classroom with an enrollment of 65 students.

One hundred years later, there now are 1,290 students housed in four schools in the district that covers Longview's north side. The district's staff includes seven administrators, 97 teachers and 59 support personnel.

"The will to survive has prevailed here," said L.L. Williamson, former SHISD superintendent. "During World War II, everyone moved away to defense plants and the district got weak. It should have been time to close the school then, but that will to survive came through. And that same will is still here today. It's evident in the growth of the district."

Recalling his early years as a

high school principal, Williamson noted that the first graduating class of the school, which was in 1942, consisted of only 25 students, which he described as "a good-sized class."

Bob Wilkinson, a student who actually completed his studies at SHHS in 1941, is recognized as the first graduate. He came back to graduate with the 1942 class.

"Changing from a common school to an independent district was another act of our will to survive," said Gene Clark, a SHISD board member and a Spring Hill graduate.

"Yes," said R.G. Hensley, another former SHISD superintendent. "That was our most difficult election, but the people of Spring Hill came through because they wanted their school to survive," he said.

"In my tenure, the school was always either involved in a bond issue or making plans for facilities that would require one because of the growth and expectations of the community. And they've continued to have them since," he added.

The school's initial one-room building was abandoned after 10 years and a new two-story frame building was erected near where the Elmira Chapel Presbyterian

See Spring Hill, 14-A

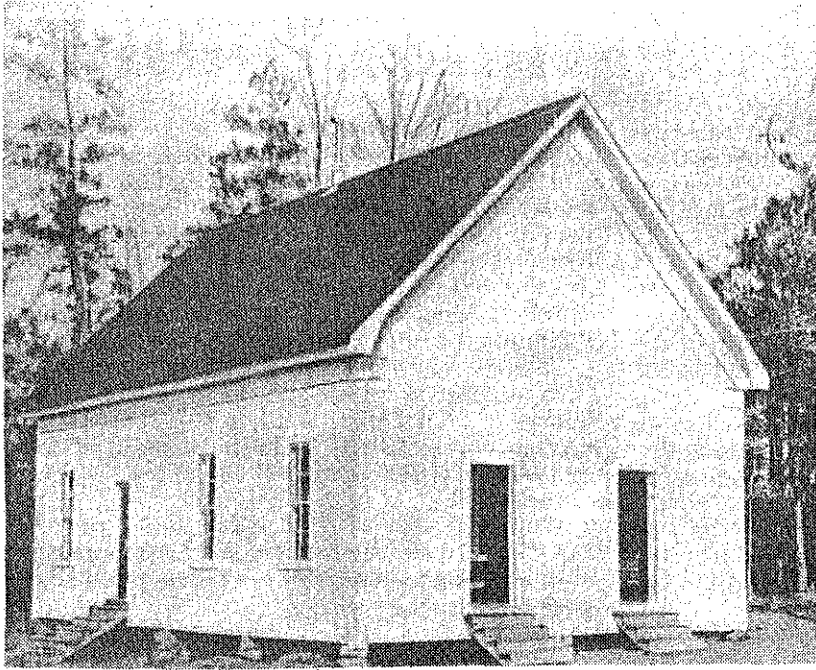


Photo shows early Spring Hill school building.

Spring Hill ISD set to mark 100th year

From 1-A

Church now stands. The first floor was for church activities and the second floor was for the public school.

Later the church deeded two acres of land to the school on which a new two-room building was constructed in 1915. After the discovery of oil in 1933, an eight-classroom building was built there.

At that time, seven grades were provided for and two buses carried older students to Longview High School.

Williamson said an 11-room brick "teacherage" was the next major construction project, that completed in 1934. "During that time, the school was located so far back into nowhere that we had to provide a place for teachers and the superintendent to live. The teacherage served that purpose," he recalled. "The superintendent had his own apartment and the teachers shared a large living area."

A grade then was added each year until the 1940-41 school year, when Spring Hill was classified as a four-year high school, gradually adding all the amenities.

According to Hensley, the school's first air conditioning, a window unit, was placed in the band hall. He said that was one of the first modernization steps after the school became an independent district in 1963.

with school building tours 10 a.m.-noon at the high school. At 10:30 a.m., an alumni organizational meeting will be held in the high school little theater.

A historical production will be held at 1:30 p.m. in L.L. Williamson Auditorium, followed by a 3 p.m. centennial parade on school grounds.

A 7:30 p.m. centennial reunion at the Longview Fairgrounds Saturday will conclude the weekend events. Admission is \$2 per person.

Central air conditioning and heat, acoustical ceilings and florescent lights were added to the elementary building in 1968.

The district's most recent construction project included nine new classrooms, restroom facilities and storage added to the junior high school in 1983. Twelve new classrooms, a music room, learning center, office area and restrooms were added to the elementary building in 1980.

"The people at Spring Hill are proud of the accomplishments that have been made over the years," said SHISD Superintendent Mike Crossland. He said the people in the community have been supportive of the district and have worked hard to put it in its present position.

However, since the district is dependent upon oil revenues, some people have speculated that the present oil crunch might result in Spring Hill's merger with the Longview Independent School District. But Crossland said such a merger is not foreseen for the district's future.

"We foresaw the fall of oil prices and addressed the issue immediately," Crossland said. "Our financial plan is secure and we see no reasons to merge," he said. "The present tax rate is not the lowest, but nor is it the highest. We may be paying more, but we're offering more too.

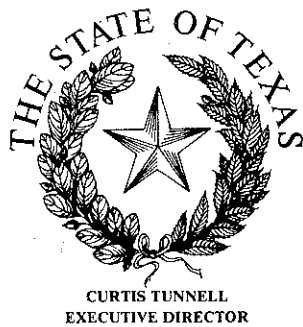
"When the board held the public hearing for setting the new tax rate, not one taxpayer protested the increase," said Hensley. "That is just representative of their commitment to the district and, again, that strong will to survive."

"We've had 100 years of excellence. And the board is committed and the community dedicated to the perpetual continuation of those quality services as an independent district," said Henley.

The centennial homecoming celebration will kick off at noon Friday with refreshments and a historical display in the high school cafeteria. A pep rally is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. in the high school gymnasium.

Pre-game activities Friday will begin at 6:45 p.m. in the high school stadium prior to the Spring Hill-Tatum football game. Immediately following, from 10 p.m. until midnight, a reception will be held for students and alumni in the high school gym.

Saturday's activities will begin



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 12276 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711 (512)463-6100

October 26, 1988

Dr. Norman W. Black, Chair
Gregg County Historical Commission
417 Mobberly Avenue
Longview, Texas 75602

Dear Dr. Black:

The State Marker Committee has completed its review of the marker application for the Spring Hill School Teacherage and has voted not to award the building marker. Significant alterations to the building, including the changes to the front windows and the transformation of the front double doors into windows, were cited as primary reasons for the decision.

The possibility of a subject marker for the teacherage was considered; however, it does not meet the age requirements for a subject marker. Is there a chance that there is enough history about the Spring Hill School, which dates to 1887, I believe, to work up a narrative history and marker application for that topic? The committee would like to encourage you to pursue that avenue if you wish.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions concerning this decision. I am returning the original applications to you for your files and/or placement in a local library.

Sincerely,

Frances Rickard, Director
State Marker Program

/fr

Enclosures

cc: Spring Hill ISD

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

Building symbolizes school district's past and future

Spring Hill alumni group wants to turn 'teacherage' structure into a museum

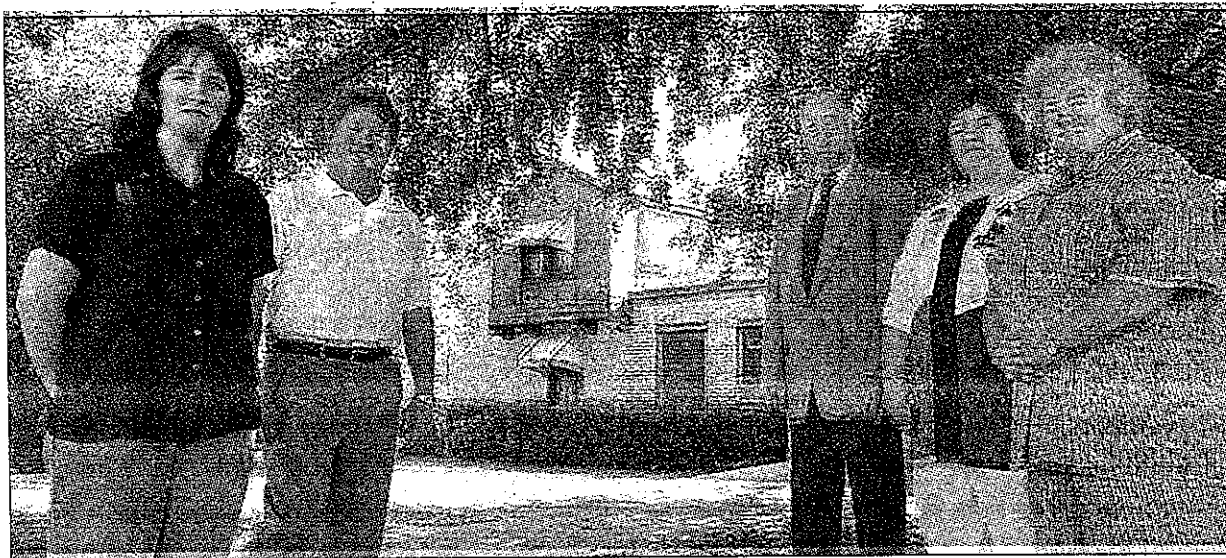
By Becky Bell
Staff Writer

On Spring Hill's campus, one building ties the school's past to its future.

It's the building formerly known as the "teacherage," which housed single teachers and the superintendent in the 1930s and today houses the nurse's office.

Because of that connection to the original school, the Spring Hill Alumni Association wants to preserve it for future generations by transforming it into a museum.

"It's been in the community for years, and I think when it's finished, the entire community can be proud of it," said alumni president Lereda Davis.



Darlene Chapman-Davis/Staff Photographer

Spring Hill alumni, from left, Janie Jordan, Billy Miller, Spring Hill ISD Superintendent Mike Crossland, Carol Strait and Lereda Davis stand outside the old 'teacherage' building Thursday morning. The Spring Hill Alumni Association wants to turn the teacherage into a museum.

Refurbishing the 11-room, two-story building will take about \$14,000 for exterior work and \$15,000 for interior work, Davis

said. The alumni hope to host the grand opening of the museum in the fall of 2001.

In addition to cash donations,

alumni also are looking for items to make the teacherage look like it did

See Building, 7A

Building

From 1A

when it first began. Items needed include band, football and cheer-leading uniforms from each decade and the 1942 and 1943 school yearbooks.

Spring Hill Independent School District bookkeeper Carol Strait said the alumni voted to work on the roof of the building with money from the alumni treasury. The group is contacting alumni through a mailing list to see if they want to contribute, but Strait said anyone can help.

"This is a community project more than an ex-student project," Strait said. "The newer students don't know what a teacherage is, but they know that it's the nurse's office. It is a community landmark and we want to preserve it."

Superintendent Mike Crossland said work on the roof began this week. The alumni association received approval for the project from the school board on Aug. 9.

"Three out of seven of our board members are Spring Hill graduates," Crossland said. "The alumni association received unanimous support for the project, and we are pleased they are undertaking this and preserving some of the (school's) heritage."

Once the Spring Hill Primary school is completed in March, the nurse's office will move there, Davis said.

Arlene Tekell, who began school at Spring Hill in 1942, said she remembers the teacherage well. Tekell said the building was a necessity because during that time, the vast farm lands provided little housing opportunities for the



Courtesy photo

First faculty to live in Spring Hill Teacherage after its completion in 1933 are shown in this photo. They were, from left, Jim Davis, Sam Rundell, R.K. Johnson, Margaret Lowe, Elizabeth Wise Scott, Elizabeth Bailey Nichols, Rachel Faulkinberry LaRue, Hazel Hunt, W.A. Heame, Verna Smith, Katherine Handcock, Mamie Watson, Dimple Edwards Hutchings and Hardy Hunt.

teachers who were required to be single.

Tekell taught at Spring Hill for 18 years and now visits with elementary students each spring about what school was like when she was a little girl. The 80-year-old remembers that her family moved from Rusk County so that the children in her family would be closer to school and not have to walk several miles.

"My father sold our farm and he and my mother got in the Model T Ford and bought a farm across the cotton patch from the two-room school. He made a deal and that's how we got here," Tekell said.

Tekell acquired a bed used in the

original teacherage which she plans to contribute to the museum. She said the association is considering decorating one of the upstairs rooms to look like it did when the teacherage was in operation.

"Some people are prone to forget the past, when I think we should build onto it," Tekell said.

Tekell said she plans to visit the museum, and she will encourage young students to do so as well.

"I certainly will, and you know, remember when," Tekell said.

For information, call Spring Hill ISD's central office, 759-4404. Donations may be sent to Spring Hill Alumni Association, P.O. Box 9573, Longview TX 75608.