

Some Notes On Growth Of Gladewater School System

It is altogether fitting that, on the celebration of Texas Education Centennial, we should pause and reflect on the labors of the public-spirited people who toiled and worried and succeeded in bringing about our school system as it is today.

The history of the development of the Gladewater County Line Independent School System is the history of actions of people of vision, people who sometimes built better than they knew, but who oftentimes at great personal and financial sacrifice, kept working for better schools for boys and girls of the Gladewater community.

No attempt will be made to give credit to all those persons whose efforts throughout the years were directed toward the improvement of Gladewater schools. The best that can be accomplished in this brief outline is to show, in rather broad summary form, some of the changes that have been brought about and to name, incidentally, some of the townspeople who helped these changes to come to pass. It is hoped that some day a complete history of Gladewater and its schools will be written, giving credit where credit is due to all persons who worked for the betterment of the schools and of the community.

Gladewater became an independent school district in 1920. In 1924, by special act of the legislature, Gladewater became a county-line independent school district. These events can be considered as happening about the mid-point in Gladewater's school history.

Records show that the first school located within the present city limits of Gladewater was the old Bethel school, or rather was a school held in the old Bethel Baptist Church, located east of the present offices of the General American Oil Company, on the old

E. D. Cleveland Is Super Of Palestine Schools

Gladewater will remember E. D. Cleveland, his wife, Yvonne, and daughter, Carol, who lived in Gladewater from 1947 to 1950 at which time he served as superintendent of our schools. Cleveland

holds a B. A. degree from Baylor University and a M. A. degree from Southern Methodist University. He has been superintendent in Overton, Buda, Nacogdoches, Gladewater and is presently employed in that position in Palestine where he has been since leaving Gladewater in 1950. He is a past president of the East Texas School Men's Club, past president of District VIII of the Texas State Teachers Association. He and his family attend the Methodist Church and are very active in civic affairs.

He has accepted the invitation of the Board of Education to attend the banquet honoring past school board members and superintendents. This affair is to be held on February 6 in the high school cafeteria.

C. R. STEVENS served as vice chairman of the Gladewater School Board in 1952-53. He resigned from the board to move to Tyler in 1953 and Archa Branum was appointed to fill his place. Stevens is associated with the Humble Oil & Refining Company in Tyler and is living in that city with his family at the present time.

Jim Ett Sheppard place. This was back about 1893. Old timers will remember Miss Morgan (later Mrs. John Jeter) and a Mr. Harris as teachers in the Bethel school.

The first school building that was built for school purposes was located on a plot just east of the present Municipal Hospital, about 1896. W. A. Coleman, father of Grady Coleman, came out of Louisiana to help build this school and be its teacher. Professor Coleman apparently had the job of collecting contributions and donations of materials and services to construct this school. This Gladewater school served the community around the turn of the century, and about 1902, a two-story frame building was erected on the site now occupied by the present elementary school. The names of B. C. Christman and O. J. Beckworth will be remembered as teachers in the new school around 1904. Part of the money for the new building and site was raised by sale of the old schoolhouse and lot to the Church of Christ, which also later moved its location. At this time W. S. Austin donated block No. 3 of the Gladewater township, on which part of the elementary school playground is presently located.

Until Gladewater became an independent school district, there are few records of the school transactions, and most of the history of the schools must be secured from residents of that era. The boundaries of the school district, up to the early 20's, followed the Gregg County line boundary on the north and west, the Sabine River on the south, and the present east line which runs north and south just east of Lake Devernia, all of it in Gregg County. This included the old Point Pleasant school district which some will remember by the name of "Pomsum Trot," and "Scratch-an-ble," located just east of the Texas Company camp at the Clarksville community.

The minutes, dated May 12, 1920, of the first meeting of the School Board after the formation of an independent district, shows the following trustees: J. F. Phillips, L. A. Jeter, M. P. Hanes, A. D. Palmer, J. A. Thompson, L. J. Everett, N. B. Moody. The first item of business was to elect A. D. Palmer, chairman; N. B. Moody, secretary, and L. J. Everett, treasurer. Other trustees shown on the records of the school since that time and up to the present are

W. M. DAY came to Gladewater in 1931. He is married and has one son, Billy Mark. The Days are active members of the First Methodist Church. Day served on the Gladewater School Board in 1935, 1936 and 1937. He has continued his interest in education through the years and at present is on the board of directors of Lon Morris College and Kilgore College. Day has served on various committees and has spearheaded drives in this area for the Boy Scouts. He is at present associated in the drug business and is an independent oil operator.

On November 28, 1950, the White Oak Music Department building which cost approximately \$85,000 was completed. Jess Petty was then head of the music department.

The Music Department contains eight sound-proof practice rooms, an office, a rehearsal room, a group practice room, a storage room, and a studio which is used for recordings. The building has two basements and is equipped with a combination air conditioning and heating system.

A new gymnasium featuring the latest athletic equipment, was completed in October of 1952.

listed below:
J. F. Phillips, L. A. Jeter, M. P. Hanes, N. B. Moody, A. D. Palmer, J. A. Thompson, L. J. Everett, J. A. Bridger, C. A. Magrill, A. F. Shepperd, R. M. Wood, J. R. Bozman, G. C. Dunaway, C. H. Moore, J. P. Jackson, M. T. Cole, A. B. Foshee, J. A. Godfrey, F. I. Jeter, J. C. Jackson, T. J. Sturdivant, Jeff Hawkins, J. W. Dickson, Crawford Vernon, A. H. Phillips, T. W. Lee, S. D. Todd, John C. Roberts, Walter Bennett, H. T. Reiger, James R. Barcus, Frank Shepperd, U. R. Butts, W. M. Day, Ames Lawrence, Herbert Hunter, Jimmie Beavers, Luther Kendall, L. L. Looney, C. W. Stockes, Loyce Phillips, Glenn Kincaid, Homer Reeves, E. L. Ames, A. A. Folsom, P. O. Teter, H. A. Clark, Phil Shipp, D. V. Loflin, Carl Randolph, Leon Waggoner, Everett Wiseman, Claude Dailey, Hugh White, Woodrow Wood, Arlan Woods, J. O. Brown, C. R. Stevens, Phillips Moore, M. D. Swearingen, Sam A. Moore, Jack Hearrell, Dewey Gray, Harold Victory and Archa Branum.

An occasion of great importance to the school district took place in 1921. In that year, an election was held for the issuance of \$25,000 worth of bonds for the construction of the red brick school building which now forms part of our present elementary school plant. The bonds (long since retired) were to become "due and payable" serially, \$500 one year from their date, and \$500 each year up to and including the year 1951, and \$1,000 each year thereafter.

Public School Began 69 Years Ago At White Oak

Beginning with a 20 foot by 30 foot building and 20 students, Will Dunagan, White Oak's first teacher, set the pace that was to lead to the present three million dollar maintenance personnel and bus drivers, five cooks, three secretaries, a dietitian, a nurse, three administrators, 38 teachers for the education of 606 students.

Before 1885 there was a small school building near the Hawkins Creek where the Adrian place now is. The children of the community attended school there until the

building burned in 1885. Mrs. Maggie Bozeman attended that school her first year. Plez Harris and Caleb Bumpus donated the ground for a new school to be built near the spring between two oak trees. In 1907 heirs signed the deed stipulating the land to be used by the school or the church. In event that the land was used for any other purpose it reverted to the heirs' estate. Work was donated on this building by citizens of the community. When it was finished John Bumpus, grandfather of Chloe Bumpus, suggested the name White Oak because of the oak trees.

In 1885 the first school building was a one-room house 20 foot by 30 foot, housing 20 students. As time went on the enrollment grew until another teacher had to be hired and a room added to the original building. At this time about 30 pupils made up the student body. Later in 1912 a larger and better building was used until the oil boom came to Gregg County.

The next building was a fine brick building with ten rooms and a large auditorium. This building was first occupied in February of 1933. It was not long until the fast-growing community necessitated the building of another large building, so in 1934, an eight-room building containing a large gymnasium and many other conveniences was built. This was occupied in November of 1934. This arrangement proved adequate until 1937 when a second story was added to the grade school, which enlarged and beautified the school immensely.

Throughout all these proceedings, the name of R. M. Wood stands out sometimes as trustee, sometimes as assessor-collector of school taxes, and sometimes as an interested citizen. His own personal files show the trials and tribulations which he and many other public-spirited citizens had to endure in their struggle to improve our schools through the years.

after during the years 1952 through 1961, and bearing interest at the rate of 5 1/2 per cent. It was pretty hard to find a buyer for Gladewater school bonds back in 1921 and the full story which reflects to the credit of the school officials and to L. J. Everett, who purchased the bonds, should form a part of the history of the development of the Gladewater Schools and the community. It is interesting to note that this bond issue passed with 66 votes for and 21 votes against.

The next major happening in the school district was the oil boom. Of interest will be the following entry in the minutes of the board of trustees of October 19, 1931: "The danger incident to the bringing in of the school well (on the elementary school site) was discussed by the board and on motion of L. A. Jeter, which carried the second of G. C. Dunaway, the board passed an order requesting the owners of the well, Messrs. Pederson and Merritt, to arrange to bring in the school well during the week-end holidays if possible." Oil was a mixed blessing at that time, and the school was sorely pressed to house the large increase in pupils brought in by the oil boom. In solving this problem, the new elementary school, the Weldon School and the present high school were constructed. Some idea of the effect of oil on property valuations can be gained in the following comparisons:

Year	Rate	Assessed	Total
1923	\$1.00	\$ 431,910	\$ 431,910
1930	1.00	449,980	449,980
1940	.65	37,148,440	252,699,830
1952	1.24	68,929,120	828,201,270

In 1932, an architect was employed to draw up plans for the Gladewater High School, and the Gladewater school board began casting around for a proper site, which problem was complicated exceedingly by the drilling and producing activity going on at that time. A bond issue was accordingly passed in 1932, in the amount of \$100,000 for the construction of a high school in its present location, and bids were taken in September of that year. The contract was awarded to H. E. Strawbridge for \$106,120. The present athletic field was also completed that year and the stadium added a year later. In that same year, the colored schools were all consolidated in Gladewater and an architect was chosen to draw up plans for the Weldon School.

The growth of Gladewater made it necessary to go back to the people of Gladewater with another bond issue in 1934, in the amount of \$200,000 for additions to the high school (the addition made up most of the present junior high section), a new elementary school (which is the present light-colored brick building on the elementary campus), and a new colored school (called Weldon after the first principal, J. Weldon Williams).

The Gladewater County Line Independent School District was expanded considerably in the year 1940 when two outlying districts, the Pritchett School District and the Evergreen School District (Friendship) voted to consolidate with Gladewater. Two additional districts were added later, the Joy District in 1948 and the Starrville District in 1950, to bring

the new elementary school will be located on 14 1/2 acres of land on Gay Avenue near the intersection with Highway 271. This will be a complete two-section school, kindergarten through 6th grade, and will have separate playroom, cafeteria and auditorium. In addition to special classrooms. Construction on these buildings was begun last November. The Weldon School will be completed by Sept. 1 of this year. The gymnasium, due to its more simple construction, will be completed this summer and the new elementary school will be some time later in completion.

With the completion of the new school building program, Gladewater will have facilities for its boys and girls that will compare favorably with any in the state. The people of Gladewater have always demanded the best obtainable for their children. The past 50 years' history of Gladewater schools and Gladewater people indicate that the citizens of this community will continue to do so.

Abbie Milner Is Teacher Who Enjoyed Attending Early Gladewater Schools

Miss Abbie Milner, who is now teacher in the Gladewater Elementary School, moved to Gladewater with her mother, brothers, and grandparents near the close of World War I. She attended the third and fourth grades in the Gladewater Elementary School. The building was a two story frame without running water and was equipped with wood burning heaters. These were the days when the boys enjoyed going out for wood and the girls enjoyed going out to dust erasers according to Miss Milner.

Blocker was the principal the year before and had gone to the Army. There were three principals the first year she was here as a third grade student, but these men were called into government service during the year. By the end of the year there were only three lady teachers in the school. The three remaining teachers were Mrs. Moore who left Gladewater to go to Tyler; Miss Birdie Fite who later married Hubert Lake, a druggist in Marshall; and Miss Lola Jackson who is the daughter of Jim Jackson of Gladewater and

our school district to its present size. Space does not permit us to give the details of these consolidations nor to mention the names of even a few of the fine citizens who lived in those areas and who were interested in sending their children to the Gladewater schools, and worked toward that end.

In 1948, additions were financed for new school buildings by voting bonds in the amount of \$300,000. This paid for the agriculture building, the elementary annex and the Weldon gymnasium, all of which were used beginning in the fall of 1949.

The new bond issue voted in 1952 for \$995,000 will provide a new school at Weldon to replace the building which burned in February of 1953, a new swimming pool at Weldon, a new gymnasium at the high school, a complete two-section elementary school on Gay Avenue, and improvements to the high school fine arts building and stadium, dressing rooms. Sketches of the three new building projects are reproduced elsewhere in this issue of the paper. Estimates on the cost of the three new buildings are as follows: Weldon School, \$240,000; gymnasium, \$185,000; Gay Avenue Elementary School, \$483,000.

The new Weldon School will be located on the site of the previous building. This school site occupies approximately 26 acres. The Weldon swimming pool will be located near the new school building.

The new high school gymnasium will be located just east of and across the street from the agriculture building. It will be arranged for two practice courts and the main playing court and will seat in excess of 2,000 persons.

The new elementary school will be located on 14 1/2 acres of land on Gay Avenue near the intersection with Highway 271. This will be a complete two-section school, kindergarten through 6th grade, and will have separate playroom, cafeteria and auditorium. In addition to special classrooms. Construction on these buildings was begun last November. The Weldon School will be completed by Sept. 1 of this year. The gymnasium, due to its more simple construction, will be completed this summer and the new elementary school will be some time later in completion.

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is now a secretary in New York City. The following year O. E. Kennedy was superintendent of schools and his wife taught primary grades. Other faculty members were Miss Lynn Staff and Miss Annie Nolen who is now Mrs. Roy Laird, Kilgore.

Miss Milner believes that these teachers were very excellent teachers who had the interest of the children at heart. "We, the children, really enjoyed school," reminisced Miss Milner.

There were two and three grades to a room at that time. Some of the people that were in the room with our story-teller were Ermon Barker who is now Dr. Barker, a bone specialist in Longview; Dr. Barker's sister, Mrs. Joan Sparks who lives in Gladewater (these are the children of Mrs. Minnie Barker and niece and nephew of Mrs. W. W. Bradley); Miss Milner's brother, Harry, who now lives at Velasco; Pauline Bell who is now Mrs. Sipes; Ray Johnson who is now Mrs. Jim Bell of Amarillo and is the daughter of Mrs. Alice Johnson of Gladewater; Olsen and R. C. Burnett who are niece and nephew of R. W. Burnett; Mildred Wood who is now Mrs. Cowdy and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Wood; Frank Shepperd who is John Ben Shepperd's uncle; Daphne Phillips who is now Mrs. Eason; and Wallace and Robert Bozeman.

Alvin Jeter and A. D. Palmer were school trustees. The brick building that is now known as the old building was built in 1922.

Miss Milner returned to Gladewater as a first and second grade teacher at the end of her sophomore year in college in 1928. The building had outside drinking fountains at that time. The elementary and high school grades were in the same building. W. H. Lewis was superintendent at that time. There were very little equipment and very few supplies furnished by the school; therefore, Miss Milner enthusiastically expressed appreciation for the equipment and supplies that she has to work with at the present time.

Some of Miss Milner's first pupils were: Curtis Thompson, who lost his

O'Banion Served As Super Here From '31 To '33

J. W. O'Banion was superintendent of the Gladewater Public Schools from 1931 to 1933. He holds a B.A. degree from New Mexico Highland University, an M.A. degree from Southern Methodist University and a doctor of Law degree from Texas Christian University. Immediately following his retirement from the Gladewater Public Schools in 1933, he served for 10 years as assistant state superintendent of public instruction. His field of activity in the department was that of director of supervision, with special emphasis on standardization and accreditation of junior and senior high schools of Texas.

Upon his leaving the department in 1943, he returned to Garland. For the past 10 years, he has given much time to active management of his several blackland farms and two small ranches in Dallas County. At the present time, he and his wife reside on a small ranch near Garland. Friends of the O'Banions will be glad to know that they plan to attend the banquet honoring ex-superintendents and past board members of the Gladewater Public Schools. This affair is to be held in the high school cafeteria on the evening of Feb. 6, at 7 o'clock.

life in the navy a short while before World War II.

David Moore, who is District Attorney and son of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Moore.

Carl Everett, Jr., who is a rancher and businessman.

Berta Richey, who is now Mrs. Red O'Brien of Red's Food Mart, Janel Adams.

Mary Beth Hendrix, who is now Mrs. Bill Kilgore.

Ted Hawkins, who is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Hawkins.

Ruby Lee Richey.

Homer Money, who is the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Money and is now on the faculty at North Texas State College.

John Bumpus, who is the brother of Ray Bumpus.

Thelma K. Clark, who is the daughter of Mrs. George Clark.

Anna Clements, who is now married and teaching in Robstown.

Earl Greggston.

James Leonard Wright, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Wright.

The P. T. A. was under the capable leadership of Mrs. E. E. Martin, deceased mother of Mrs. Max Bell who is now living in Gladewater.

Oil was found in Gladewater in the spring of 1931. At this time Miss Milner was still teaching first grade and part of the second grade. Miss Lana Godwin who is niece of Mrs. Tom Sturdivant taught third and fourth grades, Miss Betty Sue Jenkins taught

fourth and fifth grades, Miss Mable Easterly taught sixth grade, Miss Loyce Johnson who is now Mrs. Frank Shepperd taught seventh grade. Miss Wanda Penn taught in high school, and Herbert Bruner was principal of both schools. Lewis was still superintendent.

This was during the depression. Salaries had been cut, and the first part of the year the teachers swept their own rooms—the teachers were their own janitors; however, a janitor was hired later in the year. The Gladewater teachers were more fortunate than the teachers of other schools. While other teachers were receiving script and having vouchers discounted, thanks to the good management of the school board and R. M. Wood, who was secretary and business manager of the school, the Gladewater teachers always received their salaries on time and never had to accept script.

Those on the board were John Jackson, Jim Jackson, A. H. Phillips, Alvin Jeter, A. F. Shepperd, Beyrl Foshee, Grover Dunaway, C. H. Moore and J. A. Godfrey. Mrs. C. H. Moore was P. T. A. president.

Toward the later part of 1931 when oil was discovered in Gladewater the enrollment of the school greatly increased—increased to such an extent that there was a significant problem of school housing.



J. W. O'BANION

WE WISH TO

CONGRATULATE

THE PRESENT

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION'S

OUTSTANDING PROGRESS!

TODAY'S TRIUMPHS ARE TOMORROW'S CHALLENGE

We are sincerely proud of the facilities offered for the academic and the physical education of the youth of our area.

K. Wolens

Department Store

Congratulations to the Gladewater Schools

The Initiative and Resourcefulness; wisdom and leadership that our schools are inculcating in the youth of today are the answer to problems of citizenship.

H. E. [Bill] Bingham

County Commissioner