

Editor's Note: During the 1960s and 1970s, the time during which this marker was approved, the process for obtaining a Texas Historical marker was much more informal than it is now. Substantial research and writing was done at the State level, and not necessarily forwarded from local communities, as it is today.

The following images are the only documentation regarding this marker contained in the marker files of the Texas Historical Commission. Although not as detailed as the materials associated with other markers, they are presented in the event they may be of some interest to readers.

Interested parties should consult the Carnegie Center of Brazos Valley History, Bryan, Texas, for further research on this subject.

The site referenced in this document is now the site of Fannin Elementary School in Bryan, Texas.

September, 2008

History and Reference Data for First Public School in Bryan, Texas

by Mrs. W. H. Ritchey
1968

The first public school in Bryan became a reality after a city election on October 29, 1877, carried by a vote of ninety-two above the two-thirds majority. A group of interested citizens immediately bought a block of land and gave it to the city with the proviso in the deed that the land must be used for the establishment of a free, white, public school.

The cornerstone was laid in 1879 by the Masons and Thomas Sanford Gathright, first President of Texas A&M College, and in the fall of 1880 the Bryan "Graded School" composed of seven grades, opened with five women teachers and Percy V. Pennybacker, as principal. The school received a sum of money from the George Peabody Fund, probably around \$10,000 to help establish a model school.

The "Graded School," later to be called East Side School, was located facing [East] 30th street – near the street and not located in the center of the block. It was a square, brick, three-story building with classrooms on the first and second floors, and a large auditorium on the third floor for chapel, programs, and calisthenics classes. Dormer windows were around the third story. The building was heated by wood stoves.

A wooden fence, with stiles for entrance and exit, surrounded the school yard. The yard was divided into the east side for girls and the west side for boys. Each side had arbors, long wooden sheds with benches underneath where pupils could have lunch in the shade. A cistern, with tin cups attached by a chain, was also under the arbor. There were several small, one-room, wooden buildings located on the grounds. These buildings were used as private music studios. The janitor, who kept the building and built the fires, also lived on the block.

The original building, with its east and west wing two-story addition and improvements was used as a school until 1919, when a new

building was built on the same campus. The old building was used for shop, a gymnasium and cafeteria. It was dismantled in 1949, and a new gymnasium built in its place.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Interviews with Bryan Residents

Ashworth, Mrs. O.A.

Harrison, Miss Lucy

Jones, Mr. Henry

Oliver, Mrs. Boyce

Richardson, Mrs. Hazel

Sims, Miss Mamie

Newspapers

Bryan Eagle and Pilot, September, 1910

Manuscripts

Marshall, Elmer G. The History of Brazos County. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of Texas, 1937.

Wilcox, Lois Alyne. The Early History of Bryan, Texas. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas, 1952.

Yearbooks

Stephen F. Austin Annuals – 1917, 1918, and 1919

First Public School Marker

EAST SIDE SCHOOL – Site of the first public school in Bryan, originally called the “graded school”. A city election in 1877 assured Bryan a public school system. This school opened in 1880 with help from the George Peabody Fund which established model schools in former Confederate States. Cornerstone of first building was laid in 1879.

APPLICATION FORM
OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

County Brazos Town Bryan Date September 17, 1968

This marker is for (Title or Subject) Site of first public school in Bryan

Marker is to be located East 30th & Baker St. Bryan, Tex.
(BE SPECIFIC AS TO ADDRESS, LOCATION OF SITE, MILES FROM CITY LIMITS, ETC.)

Present Owner of Property Bryan Public School System

Address East 30th & Baker Street, Bryan, Tex.

Who is responsible for Marker erection, Property maintenance? Bryan School System

Board is responsible & will maintain marker.

Who prepared the history? Mrs. W.H. Ritchey

Address 301 Hensel - Bryan, Texas 77801

Attach History with Reference Data for Authenticating this Subject (2-3 Pages) (In the case of a Building Medallion, answer questions on pages 3 & 4)

Attach the Suggested Inscription for the Marker
(Copy must meet State requirements; the Texas State Historical Survey Committee reserves the right to change the suggested inscription.)

If this is an Application for a Building Medallion, enclose current glossy Picture of structure. (Application will NOT be approved, if picture is not included.)

Do you desire to be contacted Re Final Inscription: Yes No

Who is to be recognized as the Sponsor of this marker?

Name Bryan Public School System

Address Educational Services Center - Villa Maria Rd. - Bryan

This application has been submitted by:

Name Dr. Allen Schuchcraft

Address 201 Elm Street, Bryan, Tex.

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS: (Price of Marker Includes Freight)

SHIP TO Dr. Wesley K. Summers Supt.
Bryan Public Schools

[Signature] Educational Service Center
Villa Maria Rd.
Bryan, Texas

Answer the following questions as accurately and completely as possible when ordering a:
TEXAS HISTORICAL BUILDING MEDALLION AND INTERPRETIVE PLATE.

1. When was the structure built? (Exact date, if possible) 1879 - Cornerstone laid
2. If it took more than one year to build, when was it completed? 1880
3. Who was the builder? unknown
4. What materials went into its construction? Brick, Concrete, Stone, Wood
5. Who was the architect (if known)? unknown
6. What Architectural period can this structure be classified into? (Gothic, Victorian, Spanish, etc.)
Late Victorian
7. What distinguishing features, on exterior or interior does it have? It had 3 dormer windows on the third floor front.
8. Was the location of the structure significant when it was built? Yes. If so, how?
Quiet in area where children were living
9. Give details of the life of the builder, where he was from, why he settled here, what family he had, were they famous, etc. unknown
10. How many generations have lived in this structure? School held there until 1919 when it was used for a gymnasium + shop - and cafeteria
11. If a church or public building, give details and circumstances under which it was founded. Oct. 29, 1877
12. If a business establishment, what was sold or produced here?
Bryan Community. Held an election which assured Bryan a public school system. The town assumed exclusive control of its public schools.
13. What is the timing of the structure in the community (the first one, etc)? First school public 4d graded school.
14. Have famous people lived or visited here? No. Give details.
15. What events important to the area, region, or Texas have occurred here? Bryan's leading citizens were educated here

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RECEIVED

DEC 27 1971

TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

December 22, 1971

Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historical Survey Committee
Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Sir:

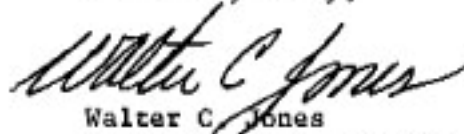
Attached is the check, in full payment, for design E Marker.

The School Board has approved the enclosed text of the proposed marker and ask that the marker be sent to Mr. Wesley K. Summers, Superintendent of Bryan Public School System, Educational Services Center, Villa Maria Road, Bryan, Texas 77801.

We look forward to having you at the marker dedication which we hope to hold shortly after we receive the marker.

Hope you had a Merry Christmas and will have a Happy New Year.

Yours very truly,



Walter C. Jones
Chairman, Brazos County
Historical Survey Committee

WCJ:mr

Attachment

3550

NAME OF MARKER Site of First Public School in Bryan

TOWN Bryan, COUNTY Brazos

DATE 12-27-71

TO: TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE

FROM: TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

On this date the Texas Historical Foundation received a donation for a Design E, 27" x 42", with Post.

We ask to be advised by your Committee if the history is sufficient, the location satisfactory, and all other requirements set forth by the State have been met.

Geryrude N. Amador

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Category: XG

Trustt Latimer: Approved

(BA) 3-14-72
Initial Date

Deolece Parmelee: Satisfactory. D. Parmelee, 3-14-72

TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

BOX 12249 • CAPITOL STATION • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711 • PHONE GR5-3288

November 16, 1972

Mr. Bill Southwell, Jr.
The Southwell Company
P.O. Drawer 289
San Antonio, Texas 78208

3550

NO. _____

Re. Design E, 27" x 42", with Post

Site of First Public School in Bryan

Bryan, TX

Brazos County

Dear Mr. Southwell:

Enclosed is an application for Design E, 27" x 42", with Post, Bryan, Site of First Public School in Bryan, for the City of Brazos County.

We would appreciate a rubbing of this inscription.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gertrude N. Amador
Secretary

GNA:s

Enclosure

SHIP TO: Dr. Wesley K. Summers,
Superintendent of Bryan Public School System
Education Services Center
Villa Maria Road
Bryan, TX 77801