

DALLAS COUNTY TEXAS HISTORY

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HUNNUCUTT SCHOOL

LATER KNOWN AS

BAYLES ELEMENTARY DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

William Cunningham (W. C.) Hunnicutt (1818-1868) and wife, Nancy Beeman Hunnicutt (1821-1914), started Hunnicutt's School in 1856. The exact location is unknown, but it is assumed to have been on Hunnicutt land. The current location at 2444 Telegraph Ave., Dallas, Texas, is near Hunnicutt Road and W. W. Glover Cemetery where the Hunnicutts are buried. The southeast corner of the school property at El Cerrito Drive and Highland Road is just a little over one-half mile from the northern most point of the W. C. Hunnicutt Survey, Abstract 0586.

The school name evolved with several variations that all included "Bayles." The names noted are Bayles School House, Bayles School, Bayles Common School District, Bayles Public School and Bayles School East Pike. Bayles Elementary Dallas Independent School District (DISD) is likely the oldest school in the DISD.

The attached "Bayles History" was written by the Parent Teacher Association as a memento of the March 23, 1956, Bayles Centennial Celebration 1856-1956. Some of the following is taken from that history and some from Dallas newspapers.

In 1870 when the Hunnicutt, Ferguson, Pupard and Motley children were finished with their schooling, the building was moved by means of a mule team to near the Bayles' home on the west side of Lottie Road. The school was used as a polling place as early as 1876 when there was mention of the re-election of Honorable J. W. Throckmorton to U.S. Congress. Prohibition (of liquor sales) was a topic of conversation and debate in 1887 when Bayles School yard was the location for a grand picnic hosting speakers for and against prohibition.

In 1890 a team of mules was used again to move the school house to the next location that was in the area which was the northernmost portion of the W. C. Hunnicutt Survey. Presently the intersection of Samuell Boulevard and Jim Miller Road occupy the general area. Samuell Boulevard has been called East Pike, Highway 80 and Orphans Home Road. (In 1880 over forty acres were purchased for Buckner Orphans Home and crop fields, hence the name Orphans Home Road.) A few years after this move, the 1856 building was sold and a new one-room school house was built.

During the 1900s the Bayles School House was mentioned in newspapers as being an important Dallas County polling place, right along with polling places that are now cities (Farmers Branch, Hutchins, Cedar Hill, Mesquite, Duncanville and Lancaster). In 1906 when Professor J. T. Tooley was principal, the school house was used as a meeting place for the election of W. J. Lanham, G. G. Kerby and Ike Hunnicutt to be delegates to the Dallas County Good Roads Association. One night in 1916, Bayles School yard was the place where political campaigners spoke during a moonlight picnic.

In 1920 a newspaper reported that due to lack of funding, West Dallas School, De Soto School and Bayles Public School would close. At some point, the situation changed and in 1932 the building was remodeled and a second room added. Three years later, students from Bayles School East Pike along with the principal, Mrs. D. C. Motley, took a field trip to the Dallas Morning News plant.

A drawing depicting the planned new building was published in the Dallas Morning News, July 21, 1940, page 11. The caption read: "New School Planned for Bayles District. Now a two-room building on U. S. Highway 80 near Buckner Orphans Home ...[the] new building to be just off Ferguson Road near East Pike a mile north of the present site." For partial funding, a \$26,867 building grant was received from the Works Progress Administration.

The students moved into the new building in June of 1941. The two-room building was sold, but the old school bell was kept. The graduating seventh-grade class of 1942 chose to hold graduation ceremonies in the old building (near Buckner Orphans Home) for sentimental reasons.

In 1991 Bayles Elementary celebrated 135 years in operation. The students sold blue-on-white t-shirts declaring "Happy Birthday Bayles Bobcats, 1856-1991." At an evening celebration, students starred in a play featuring Old Man Hunnicutt, Mrs. Nancy and their children. The audience laughed upon seeing Old Man Hunnicutt with his walking cane and long pointy white beard. My mother, Helen J. Sullivan, and I were in attendance and were asked to stand for our introduction as representatives of Hunnicutt descendants. We received loud applause and cheers much to our delight. The attached "Bales History" was handed out to the attendees of the evening celebration at the school.

EAYLES HISTORY

Once upon a time about the year 1856 in the eastern part of Dallas County (exact location unknown), W. C. Hunnicutt, realizing the importance of education for his children, founded what was probably the first school in the new settlement of Dallas. The school was called "Hunnicutt's" and six children attended. There was a Ferguson, a Hunnicutt, and a Pupard among the first students. Tuition paid by the students provided the \$6.07 salary for the teacher. The one-room building was constructed with little regard to heat, light, and ventilation. The school was open four or five months during the winter and was heated by a pot-belly stove in the middle of the room. The children sat on hard benches and used slates. It is said that the children erased their slates by spitting on their hands and rubbing them over their work. The Motley children, who lived some distance from the school, were provided a path when their father plowed a furrow through the woods for the children to follow.

The school continued at this location until the year 1870, when a team of mules was hitched to the building and pulled to what is now the west side of Lottie Road, near the old Bayles home. The name was changed to Bayles at this time.

The children brought their lunches in syrup buckets which were kept under their benches. When they got hungry, they would reach under their bench and sneak something to eat. Water had to be carried. The rest rooms were connected to the school house by a path.

Interscholastic competition began early in Bayles. The school history tells of Bayles having won a spelling contest, using words from the Blue Back Speller, in competition with Reinhardt School.

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Some of the early teachers were Mr. Dickey, Mr. Pemberton, Mr. Ferguson, and Mr. Turner. The typical teacher of this period were not required to have the formal education that is necessary for our teachers of today. Some of the pupils were Tom and Ike Rupard, Judge Foree, and Florence Hobbs (Spurlock.)

In 1890 the school was again moved by a team of mules to the southwest corner of what is now Jim Miller and Highway 80, where it stood unchanged for several years. A new one-room building was constructed. The old building was sold for \$40.00 and used as a barn until it later burned. In other words, they took the children out and put the cows in -- until some of the boys decided, as a joke, to put a cow in the school room overnight. When the teacher unlocked the door the next morning he was surprised -- to say the least. It is believed that Bill Wood, a student at Bayles at the time, could supply interesting details if placed under oath. Sally Garrett (Jordon) was a student also at this time.

In the year 1909 the greater importance of children's education was realized and the school term was increased to 7 months.

Professor Thomas E. Henry was the Superintendent of Schools in 1919 and held that position for several years. Wood McClanahan tells about Prof. Henry teaching the students after the boys -- being just boys -- had run off teacher after teacher. Prof. Henry cleared the willowpatch of switches, which made room for a deeper appreciation of education. Some of the students around this time were the Gardner children and Homer and Ralph Kemp.

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The present day term of 3 months vacation and 9 months of learning was begun in 1929. Education has progressed rapidly within the past few years.

At the mid-term of 1928 Bayles School passed a test of endurance when the school was to be abolished; but as a special favor, Mr. D. C. Motley, teacher, was told that if she could get 16 students, the school would remain open. At this time, H. L. Goerner was Supt. of Schools, and Jim Miller was County Commissioner. Mrs. Motley tells about the little one-room building, a few benches being provided. She made tables and chairs out of crates for the first and second graders. She brought a big can of milk every day from her farm for the students to have with their lunches.

In 1932 a second room was added to the little school and it was completely remodeled. It was customary to paint frame school houses red, not because the color was preferred, but because red paint was cheaper than any other obtainable -- thus the little red school house became a popular symbol of education. Bayles had to be satisfied with just a very thin coat of white paint because of limited funds.

Mr. Joe P. Harris was Supt. of Schools from 1935 to 1951. Warren Carothers wrote an editorial about Mr. Harris in the "Bayles News" March 4, 1936. He wrote, "Mr. Harris makes a fine Supt. because he helps the County School. He has managed for us to have a library bus. It comes along once every three weeks and takes up the old books and leaves some new ones. Mr. Harris has also done many other things to help us. He fixed us up with report cards that have U for unsatisfactory and S for satisfactory. It is easier for the teacher to score us when she only has to check us on effort and ability. But the best thing that Mr. Harris does is to come to see us often. We all get out our smiles when he walks in the door."

****In Memoriam****

Mr. Landrum Wilson Leech came to Dallas in 1942 to take the position of principal of Bayles. He taught in Bayles until April of 1943 when he enlisted in the U. S. Army. He served with the 90th Division and went overseas in March of 1944. After spending several weeks in England he went into France on D-Day, June 6, 1944. He lost his life at the battle of St. Lo July 6, 1944. His body was returned to this country in 1948 and buried at Rockwall, Texas. He was a Christian and devoted his life in trying to help other people, especially the children that he loved so well to teach. During his association with Bayles he won the love and respect of all his students, as well as their parents, who mourned his untimely death.

A big accomplishment in 1948 was the project of Dental Hygiene. The school won the All-City Improvement Cup by keeping 126 dental appointments, with the cooperation of the P.T.A., headed by Mrs. J.D. Quillin.

As the community grew, the school became so crowded it was necessary each year to eliminate one top grade until only the first three grades remained. In 1955, by converting the auditorium into class rooms, the 4th grade was again added. This year there are 153 students enrolled in the four classes. The Bayles School has had a member of the pioneer Ferguson family in its student body each year since its organization in 1856 with the exception of three years. Jimmie Binford is a great-great granddaughter of Willie Hobbs Ferguson, and is a first grade student this year.

All incidents and characters mentioned in this history are real people, citizens of a growing community. The intentions of the foregoing pages are to bring back a few pleasant memories of your school days. All dates and incidents are as accurate as can be expected, being told from one generation to the next. We hope you will treasure this history as a memento of this occasion: Bayles Centennial Celebration 1856-1956 on this 23rd day of March in this year of 1956.

Bayles P.T.A.

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INTERESTING FOOTNOTES

In 1897, a teacher's salary was \$45.00 per month.

In 1900, a teacher's salary was \$60.00 per month.

In 1915 a teacher's salary was \$80.00 per month. The women teachers averaged about \$5.00 per month less than men teachers. The above salaries are for men.

In 1947, Bayles P.T.A. had 100% membership from its families. This is something to be proud of.