History of Lamar School

Margaret Patterson

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.utep.edu/hist_honors
HISTORY OF LAMAR SCHOOL

El Paso, Texas
July, 1955

Margaret [Patterson

El Paso, Texas
July, 1955
LAMAR SCHOOL IN 1915

LAMAR SCHOOL IN 1951
HISTORY OF LAMAR SCHOOL

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION
   Location of Lamar School
   Difficulties in Construction

II. OPENING OF LAMAR SCHOOL
   First Faculty
   Physical Plant
   Curriculum
   Extra-Curricular Activities
   School Population
   Boundaries

III. ITEMS OF INTEREST
   Honors Won
   Annexes to Lamar School
   Increase in Enrollment
   Traditions of Lamar School
   War Activities
   Parent-Teacher Association
   Miscellaneous Items

IV. CONCLUSION
   Appendix
   Bibliography
I.

INTRODUCTION

Location of Lamar School

In 1906 the new residential district, Golden Hill, had just been put on the market with only a few scattered residences completed. There were no paved streets in that part of town, but there was a single track for the street-car on Boulevard, now named Yandell.  

1 Records of the Administrative Office of the El Paso Public Schools.

The School Board realized that the City of El Paso would grow eastward and that another elementary school would be needed on the then edge of town. On the School Board at that time were: Captain T. J. Beall, Dr. Howard Thompson, C.W. Fassett, Henry Welsch, J.H. Harper, Dr. W. N. Vilas, and Judge Beauregard Bryan. S. P. Putnam was Superintendent of the Public Schools.  

2 Ibid.

Statement of the Bond Issues made for the Public Schools of the City of El Paso:

Fifth series: $50,000, 40 year 5% bonds, issued in 1905; used to purchase grounds, to supplement the funds realized from the sale of the old Central School, in the erection of the San Jacinto School.
Records of the Administrative Office of the Public Schools.

The School Board purchased two pieces of land for the school sites. Lamar School was to be built in Block 59, Franklin Heights Addition, fronting Montana Street. This new elementary school was named in honor of Mirabeau B. Lamar, second President of the Republic of Texas whose foresight laid the foundation for the educational system of Texas.  

El Paso Herald, September 27, 1905, p. 3.

An article on October 20, 1905 stated that "work was started on Lamar School today. The foundation work will be completed by the end of the week."  

Ibid., October 20, 1905, p. 8.

Difficulties in Construction

The architect for the building was Edward Kneezell and the Mississippi Valley Construction Company was awarded the contract. The brick used in the first part of construction was found to be faulty. That part had to be taken down and rebuilt. The School Board appointed a committee of contractors to investigate: Frank Powers, Fred Wright, and W. H. Rattenbury. The Board also passed a resolution voicing
belief that the public interest would be protected because the contracting company had given bond in large sum.

Bad luck seemed to attend the construction of Lamar School. Delayed shipments of slate impeded the final work, but the lost carload of slate was located and delivered to Lamar School site and the building was expected to be completed in two more weeks.

But on April 24, 1906, all work was stopped. The contractor and the School Board had trouble over finances. There was $1500 to $2000 more work to be done and the School Board was holding $10,000 in cash. When the School Board had made the last advance, the agreement was the work would be completed in two more weeks. At the end of the two weeks, the school was not completed and the contractor asked for another advance. This the School Board refused to make.

After settling local claims for materials purchased, the School Board notified the Mississippi Valley Construction Company to give possession and move out. The School Board
took over the contract and Rattenbury and Davis, Contractors, completed the job. Architect Kneezell, as the representative of the School Board, directed the work, and Captian T.J. Beall, Judge Beauregard Bryan, and C.W. Fassett were appointed as a committee with power to act in straightening out the difficulties with the construction company. The Fidelity Bonding Company of Baltimore sent John Harris to El Paso for a conference with the School Board. He said the bonding company would make the $18,000 good as the construction company had not fulfilled the contract.

Walls settled and a big crack appeared from the ground to the roof on the east end of the building, an inch or more across in some places. The sinking was so pronounced on the southeast corner that heavy stone pieces had snapped in two. A crack had appeared, also, on the west side, but not so wide. The damage was caused by a weakened foundation and leaky sewer pipes.

In February, 1908, at the Board Meeting, a motion was made and the resolution adopted that Mr. Frank Powers be authorized and directed to repair the foundation of Lamar School and to investigate the water and sewer pipe lines and
to put them in first-class condition immediately. These repairs were to be made under the supervision of Architect Kneezell.

11 School Board Minutes, El Paso, Texas, February 4, 1908.

At the Board Meeting in October, 1910, a letter was read from the City Building Inspector calling attention to the condition of the main steps at Lamar School. The steps were settling and were in a dangerous condition due to insufficient width and depth of the foundation. Also, a letter was read from Sorenson and Morgan, builders of the steps, in which they stated that they would repair the steps if the Board considered their company at fault, but if the Board found that water ran in from the street, they would not consider themselves at fault. The matter was referred to the External Committee to have the steps put in good condition.

12 Ibid., October 11, 1910.

In September, 1912, a motion was made and carried to have the walls painted in order to see if any more cracking or settling would take place.

13 Ibid., September, 1912.
After the school building was completed, Montana Street was graded and the school grounds were several feet below street level. Miss Alice Fitzpatrick, who was principal of Lamar and a woman of vision and imagination, designed the parking which would be slanting along Montana Street. The school grounds at Lamar School are distinctive and like no other in the city.

14 Interview with Mrs. Alberta Morse, June 27, 1955.

The sixteen-foot parking slopes from the sidewalks and is backed by concrete curbing to separate the parking from the playground. The School Board spent $500 and the patrons of Lamar School raised $500. The Board had the work done and the patrons attended to the grass and beautification.

15 El Paso Herald, April 1, 1909, p. 8.

In addition to trouble with the building construction, the front steps, and the grounds, the roof proved unsatisfactory. In 1914, a contract was awarded to H. Welsch Company to put a new roof on Lamar School at a cost of $756 with a guarantee of ten years.

16 School Board Minutes, August 18, 1914.

In May, 1917, H. W. Johns-Manville Company submitted a proposition to apply an additional sheet of asbestos roofing
without cost on condition that the framework of the roof be properly prepared at the expense of the School Board. This offer was accepted by the Board.

Ibid., May 28, 1917.
II.

OPENING OF LAMAR SCHOOL

First Faculty

When Lamar School opened on September 19, 1906, State Superintendent R. B. Cousins gave the address at the dedication exercises. The first faculty was composed of Miss Francis Bills, Miss Sallie Blakesley, Miss Jean Borum, Miss Bessie Roe, Miss Alberta Heep, Miss Sophia Gilchrist, Miss Edith Giddings, Miss Anna Washburn, and Miss Emma Hoffman. Miss Alice Fitzpatrick was principal. Only eight rooms were in use the first year, but by the following September, the full room capacity, seventeen rooms, had been completed.

---


---

The principal, Miss Fitzpatrick, also taught the low first grade, but handled both jobs well.

19 Interview with Mrs. Alberta Morse.

---

Physical Plant

The building is constructed of red brick with the first floor or basement made of rock. The steps leading to the
main entrance go to the second floor as the first floor is below the street level. The large auditorium is in the center of the third floor. The windows were made of ribbed glass to soften the glare from the sun and had beveled window frames of iron to admit light on the darkest day. The walls of the large classrooms were tinted different shades of green, slate, terra cotta, and red. Above the entrance is a large iron plate with the inscription: "Cultivated mind is the guardian genius of Democracy; It is the only dictator that freemen acknowledge and the only security that freemen desire." Mirabeau Lamar.

On top of the building are two small towers. In one is a large bell, not used any more. The rope to ring this bell extended from the roof, through the second floor to the first. The rope was not hidden, and the teachers in the nearby rooms had to be on the watch for boys who would give the rope a yank as they passed by. The janitor rang the bell to open school, at lunch-time, and to close school. The tones of the bell could be heard four or five blocks away, and many a child has run the last block to get to school on time when he heard the first peal of the bell.
Another unique feature was the spiral fire escape. In 1915, fire escapes were installed upon all public school buildings, "all to be iron stairway escapes except at Lamar, San Jacinto, and Franklin which would be spiral fire escapes."

---

22 School Board Minutes, August 31, 1915.

The spiral escapes were replaced by stairway escapes several years ago, but many of El Paso's citizens can remember the thrill of sliding down.

In 1910 the kindergarten room was tinted in a lighter color, as it was decided that the dark walls were injurious to the eyes of the children.

---

23 Records of Administrative Office.

Then in 1913, larger windows were put in the kindergarten room to admit more light.

---

24 School Board Minutes, May 21, 1913.

Curriculum

When Lamar School opened on September 19, 1906, it housed grades from kindergarten through the eighth grade. The kindergarten was the fourth to be added in the El Paso
Lamar School now has fifteen classrooms, two teachers' lounges, an auditorium, a library, principal's office, and a cafeteria.

In the year 1908-1909 when Mr. F. M. Martin was the Superintendent of the El Paso Schools, manual arts courses were put in all elementary schools. Lamar had suitable equipment for manual training and sewing classes. However, these classes were discontinued in 1933 due to the depression. For lack of funds, teachers of special subjects were not placed in the elementary schools. Work in art and music was carried on wherever possible.

Records of Administrative Office.

In 1920 the girls' lavatory on the top floor was converted into a room for the sewing classes. This room is now used for the library which was formerly housed in the back of the auditorium. In 1920 the manual training classes were held in a room at the east end of the basement.

Interview with Miss Alicia Swann, July 3, 1955.
The class for deaf children was held at Lamar School from 1924 until 1941 when it was moved to Bailey School. A special class for defective children was held at Lamar in the year 1935-1936, when it was moved to Bailey School.  

Records of the Administrative Office.

Lamar School has always maintained the high standards of the El Paso Public School System as attested by the records of its graduates and by the many honors won in academic and extra-curricular activities. Lamar School has had some of the outstanding teachers and principals of the school system. Both Miss Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Arrington were principals of Lamar for many years and so were able to carry out long-range plans that showed marked results in the accomplishments of the students.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Lamar School has had enviable records in extra-curricular activities. The students participated in all activities with enthusiasm and keen school spirit. Many trophies and plaques attest to skill in athletic contests. At one time Lamar School had the distinction of being called the "cradle of athletics" because it held first place for a number of years in many sports: baseball, football, soccer, volley-ball, and track.  

Ibid.
The Student Council was one of the outstanding features of the extra-curricular activities. Students paid a poll tax of one cent for the privilege of voting in the school elections. They elected a president of Lamar School, a vice-president, a secretary and treasurer, two health officers (a boy and a girl). A representative from each class met with the Student Council once a week after school in the auditorium. The Student Council heard discipline cases and transacted other school business. They assessed penalties such as memorizing codes of character and citizenship. The students took their responsibilities seriously. The principal or a teacher met with the Student Council, but only in an advisory capacity.

30 Interview with Miss Minnie Donovan, June 24, 1955.

Another activity participated in by all students was the large May Festival every spring. The Festival took place on the school grounds, ended with a May Pole Dance, and then every one went inside to the auditorium for an hour's program. This annual May Festival was discontinued four years ago.

31 Ibid.

Music was stressed at Lamar School. The Girls' Glee Club and the Boys' Glee Club performed on many programs and won honors for the school. School opera programs in El Paso
originated at Lamar. Some of the operas given were: Aida, Martha, Bohemian Girl, Hiawatha, Lohengrin, and Il Trovatore. There were usually two operas given each year to familiarize the children with the best standard opera music.

Lamar School was the first elementary school to publish a school paper, but this had to be discontinued when the eighth grades were moved to El Paso High School in 1916 and printing was discontinued in the grades.

The paper was called "Poor John's Almanac" and was published every three or four weeks. On the first page of the second issue was an India-ink drawing of a high-browed individual looking like Elbert Hubbard and William Faversham combined, and labeled "Honorable J.R. House, the gentleman this paper is named for."

Lamar School issued the first annual to be published by a grammar school in El Paso. The book contained thirty pages and was bound in the school colors, green and gold. The name of the annual, "El Ocotillo", and the year "1915" were printed in gold letters on a green background. This first annual was dedicated to Miss Fitzpatrick, the principal. It was printed by the pupils in the manual arts print shop.
Another activity participated in by many students is the Schoolboy Patrol. It has been in operation for twenty-six years. The El Paso Lions Club sponsors the Patrol and furnishes caps, white belts, and certificates to the members. The 20-30 Club is co-sponsor and furnishes the "Safety Sally" signs which mark the school zones.

Since both Montana and Yandell are streets with constant traffic, the twenty-five Patrol Boys at Lamar School have a heavy responsibility.

School Population

When Lamar School was opened in September, 1906, the enrollment consisted chiefly of Anglo-American children from the most prominent families of the city. In the almost fifty years of the school's existence, there has been a slow but steady transition from an Anglo-American population to one in which the majority of students come from Latin-American homes.
Many of the old homes on Wyoming, Missouri, and Yandell Streets have been replaced by stores in a zone extending from Cotton Avenue to town. Many of the once beautiful homes have been converted into apartment or rooming houses and most of the Anglo families have moved eastward into newer residential districts.

Interview with Miss Donovan.

Boundaries

In 1910 the Lamar School District was defined as extending east of Brown Street, north of the G.H. and S.A. Railroad tracks, and west of Cotton Avenue. Also, all pupils from the Highland Park District above the fifth grade were to report to Lamar School. In 1912, the Lamar District was extended somewhat: "All pupils below high school, residing east of Noble Street, west of Highland Park Car line (if south of alley line between Erie and Detroit Streets), and north of the G.H. and S.A. Railroad tracks." The present boundaries are: Octavia Street on the west, railroad tracks on the south, Palm Street on the east, and Detroit Street to the mountains on the north.

Records of the Administrative Office.
ITEMS OF INTEREST

Honors Won

Lamar has had an enviable record in both academic and extra-curricular activities.

1910- Harold Detwiler, first in D.A.R. Essay Contest
1910- David Cheavens, first in D.A.R. Essay Contest
1913- Ervin Schwartz, first in Declamation Contest
1914- Charles Thurston, first in Declamation Contest
1914- Joe Wright, first in Spelling Contest
1915- William Mayfield, first in Declamation Contest
1916 Emmie Wheatley, first in Declamation Contest
1919- Park Pittman, first in Declamation Contest
1920- Betty Jane Huling, second in Declamation Contest

A large trophy for Champions in Sports was won for three consecutive years: 1920, 1921, 1922. Other trophies at Lamar are:

1911- Trophy in Basketball
1914- Trophy in Track and Basketball
1916 and 1917- Trophy in Volley-ball
1916- Large trophy for Winners in Annual Field Meet
1937- Soccer Champions
1937, 1939, 1940- Trophy in Track
1947- L-Y Tigers in Gra-Y Football League
1948-1949- Champions in Volley-ball, Basketball, Track, and Soft-ball
Several placques were won by the Girls' Chorus.
1913- Trophy for Junior Football Champions given by Silberberg Brothers has the following names engraved on it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hubert Littleton</th>
<th>Charles Thurston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willie Bias</td>
<td>William Peticolas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Rainey</td>
<td>Louis Marty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacy Coalson</td>
<td>Barstow Morris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theo Lochausen</td>
<td>Madison Mudd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Walker</td>
<td>Paul Broyles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cecil Boyd - Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James G. Brown - Coach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1915- Trophy for Football Champions has the following names engraved on it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W. Leach</th>
<th>J. Pierce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V. Lochausen</td>
<td>A. Rowe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Ericson</td>
<td>R. Haupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Sanders</td>
<td>H. Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Tankersley</td>
<td>J. Richardson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Palmer</td>
<td>R. McCracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Gobel</td>
<td>J. Carlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Boyd, Captain</td>
<td>T. Talbot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G.V. Jackson - Coach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These trophies are on display at Lamar School.

Annexes to Lamar School

At a special meeting of the School Board in September, 1915, a motion was made and unanimously carried that the Chairman of the External Committee and the Superintendent
of Schools be instructed to rent space in one or both of the churches near Lamar School, in order to relieve the overflow of students.

At the same meeting, a motion was made and unanimously carried that Trustee Stevens be authorized to secure option for 60 days on the property adjacent to Lamar School grounds.

40
School Board Minutes, September 6, 1915.

In October of that same year, the board voted to accept the offer of Mrs. Rue Jackson to sell the four lots fronting on Boulevard at the east end of the school grounds for $4,750.

41
Ibid., October 4, 1915.

On October 20, 1915, Burgess and Burgess, attorneys for the School Board, gave an opinion regarding the title of the lots to be purchased from Mrs. Jackson. The External Committee was instructed to request Mrs. Jackson to have the title perfected and objections removed in order to close the trade.

42
Ibid., October 20, 1915.

The action of the External Committee and the President
of the School Board in authorizing the delivery of the voucher to Mrs. Jackson, in payment of Lots # 29, 30, 31, and 32 in Block 59, Franklin Heights, situated at the Lamar School, was approved.

Seven years later, at the suggestion of Miss Alicia Swann, principal, a committee of Lamar parents urged the Board to buy, if possible, all ground in the school block that was privately owned and occupied by stores and houses on the corner of Montana and Dallas Streets. The members of the Board agreed that this property was very desirable and would be useful for Lamar's use and that they hoped to be able to buy it soon.

It was more than two years later that this property was bought. A letter was sent to Horace B. Stevens instructing him to secure for the Board possession of all buildings on Lamar School grounds as soon as possible without violating any agreements in force.

The question then was: Shall the vacant buildings on
the Lamar grounds be wrecked or be left for school use? The decision was made to fix up the vacant store to make it satisfactory for use as a cafeteria, the expense being shared by the Board and the Lamar P.T.A.; one building to be fitted up for manual training classes; one prepared for a residence for the janitor; one used for the deaf class.

46 School Board Minutes, January 20, 1925.

This cafeteria served good hot lunches under the capable manager, Mrs. Bergman. The store building facing north on Montana was used as the kitchen and a small room on the east was equipped with tables and chairs. The space was very limited and was discontinued as a cafeteria after a few years. Lamar School was without a cafeteria of any kind for many years and it was not until 1947, when Mrs. Olga Pool Wilson was principal, that a storeroom in the southeast corner of the basement was converted into a cafeteria. This space was soon out-grown; the storeroom was made into a kitchen and the kindergarten room used for the cafeteria. This arrangement is still in use.

47 Interview with Miss Donovan.

In 1924 the deaf class of twelve students occupied
one of the small houses. This class remained there with Mrs. Belle Howell as teacher until 1941. As all buildings were to be torn down to give more space for the playground, the deaf class was moved to Bailey School. At one time the enrollment of the deaf class at Lamar reached twenty-two.

---

48

Interview with Mrs. Belle Howell, June 30, 1955.

---

Increase in Enrollment

In September, 1910, Lamar School had an enrollment of 467; in 1911, 502; in 1912, 591; in 1913, 632. There had been a drop in Lamar's enrollment in September, 1916, as the eighth grades had been transferred to the new El Paso High School. Usually fifteen or seventeen teachers were employed at Lamar School, but in the year 1928-1929, twenty-four teachers were employed in order to take care of the large enrollment. The building has only seventeen classrooms, so classes were doubled-up, held in the auditorium, and all available space was used. The enrollment for 1954-1955 averaged around 500.

---

49

Records of the Administrative Office.
The increased enrollment at Lamar in 1928 was due to the large number of students from Fannin School. Fannin was condemned and no longer to be used as a public school. The students were sent to Lamar, Crockett, Dudley, and the basement of Austin Junior High, now Houston. In 1930 with the opening of the new Austin High, Austin Junior High was converted into Houston, an elementary school, and the crowded conditions of Lamar were relieved.

Interview with Miss Swann.

In 1913, there were seventy-two children in the kindergarten with Miss Anna Washburn and Miss Emma Hoffman as teachers. That year two low first grades were necessary.

El Paso Herald, October 24, 1913, p. 5.

In 1928, Mr. R. C. Semple, speaking for the patrons of Lamar School before the Board, discussed the crowded conditions at Lamar and outlined a plan for the first unit of a proposed new building on the Lamar School site. No action was taken by the Board.

School Board Minutes, December 18, 1928.
Traditions of Lamar School

Lamar School until 1950 carried on a tradition started by Mrs. Arrington in 1922. The students each morning went to their classrooms to put up their books and then assembled at appointed places. The entire school body took part in the opening exercises. All classes in the basement went to the kindergarten room; classes on the first floor assembled in the main hall, facing the grand piano; classes on the second floor went to the auditorium. First, the students sang a patriotic song, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. There was a minute's silent prayer, followed by the singing of a hymn. The entire ceremony took only five or six minutes, but it meant a great deal to the students and the teachers. 53

53 Interview with Miss Dorothy Emig, June 23, 1955.

Another tradition followed through many years was the marching of classes to change rooms. Eleven girls were assigned periods during the day to go to the auditorium, strike a loud chord on the piano, and then play a march as the students changed classes. 54

54 El Paso Herald, October 31, 1931, p.7.
This custom was continued until modernization brought the automatic bell-system. The inter-communication system was installed in the year 1954-1955. In the old days, messages were sent to the rooms by selected students who considered it a great honor to be entrusted with notes and bulletins. To designate the special messengers, tops of cigar boxes were painted blue with the word "PASS" painted on it in black and each messenger carried this sign with him.

Interview with Miss Donovan.

Another tradition enjoyed by students and teachers was the auditorium period every Friday afternoon. The lower grades held their assembly first; the one for the upper grades followed immediately. At the beginning of each term, every class was assigned a Friday date to be in charge of a program. The students enjoyed planning and seeing these programs, and the participation was excellent training.

Ibid.

Each class, also, had an auditorium period in the classroom scheduled regularly in the week's program. A varied list of topics was assigned; current events, poems, dramatizations, patriotism, citizenship, health, famous men and women, special days. The class worked in groups on
these assignments. Some of the older teachers still schedule these classroom auditorium periods.

In addition to the annual May Festival held near the end of the school year, Parents' Day was observed every spring, featuring exhibits of the pupils' work, folk dances, drills, songs, and orations. In the El Paso Herald was a write-up of the program given in the afternoon in the auditorium.

1. Song - "Suwanee River" by the pupils of the high first grade
   Teacher - Miss Mary Alice Jones
   Pupils - Gladys Primm, Elizabeth Watson, Margaret Hamel, Helen Carter, Margaret Gibson, Juanita Williams, Marjorie Congdon, Esther Katz, Anna B. McChesney, Ruth Osborne, Myrtle Robinson, Katarina Vasquez.

2. Declamation - "Webster's Reply to Haynes" by Max Ravel.

3. Song - "Ah, So Fair" from the opera Martha by Madison Mudd.


5. Declamation - "Gratton's Reply to Corry" by Charles Thurston.

6. Song - "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes" by Will Roberts.

7. Song - "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms" by the Lamar Boys' Glee Club.

8. Danish Games - "Ma's Little Pigs" - played by pupils of low first grade.

9. Danish Dance of Greeting-
   Danish Shoemaker's Dance
   Swedish Dance of Greeting-
Swedish Dance Game- "I See You"
Children of the second and third grades.
10. Indian Dance - Pupils of the low fifth grade.
11. Gymnastic Drill - Pupils of the low sixth grade.
12. Russian Folk Dance - Pupils of the low seventh and high eighth grades.
13. Scottish Highland Fling - Pupils of the low eighth grade.

All classrooms had interesting exhibits, but special mention was made of the display in the kindergarten.

In the kindergarten room the children had constructed a medieval castle of their building blocks, illustrating the story of Oscar Wilde, "The Selfish Giant." The castle had four Norman turrets and was surrounded with a beautiful garden, containing walks and fountains and ponds, with beds of flowers and blooming trees under which little doll children played. 58


The school colors of Lamar School have always been green and gold. The yellow crysanthemum is the school flower. The school motto is "Everything to help and nothing to hinder." 59

59 Lamar School Records.

Many El Paso men and women of today remember the "green and gold" and the fine school spirit when they attended Lamar School: James Rogers, Dr. Robert Homan, Chris Fox, William Mayfield, Dr. James Gorman, Dr. Haskel
War Activities

During the war years, students, teachers, and parents of Lamar School cooperated whole-heartedly with the war effort. War Bonds and Stamps were bought regularly. Students gathered scrap metals, old rubber, grease, buttons, newspapers, and clothing. Teachers and parents worked faithfully in issuing Ration Books. The Lamar School grounds were used for drill purposes by the Texas State Guard one night a week in 1949. The City of El Paso paid for the electric current used on that one night.
Lamar School is the first school to complete the organization of war stamp saving societies and to make a war report to headquarters. It has eighteen societies and the total membership is 610.

The societies are organized under clever names, such as, Wilson Sammy Savers, Over the Top, The Spirit of '76, We Help Win, Wake Up America, First Aid to Thrift, and Red, White, and Blue.

The school also has its committees known as: 'the Vigilance Committee' which keeps its eyes on the foolish spenders; 'My Brother's Helper Committee' that locates jobs for those who wish to work and buy stamps with the money earned; the 'Hustling Committee' who work all their extra time.

---

El Paso Herald, April 16, 1918, p. 12.

Lamar School is proud of its former students who fought for their country. In World War I, James (Buster) Biggs, an ex-Lamar student, lost his life. The Biggs Air Force Base was named for him. Those who were killed in World War II and have a Gold Star at Lamar in their memory are: Richard Billman, A.K. Brooks, Henry Barrett, George Beys, Edward Marceyra, Jack McCarthy, Robert Samaniego, and William Dean Hawkins (El Paso's only Congressional Medal of Honor Winner in World War II.).

---

Lamar School Records.

---

Parent-Teacher Association

The Parent-Teacher Association was organized at Lamar
Lamar School is the first school to complete the organization of war stamp saving societies and to make a war report to headquarters. It has eighteen societies and the total membership is 610.

The societies are organized under clever names, such as, Wilson Sammy Savers, Over the Top, The Spirit of '76, We Help Win, Wake Up America, First Aid to Thrift, and Red, White, and Blue.

The school also has its committees known as: 'the Vigilance Committee' which keeps its eyes on the foolish spenders; 'My Brother's Helper Committee' that locates jobs for those who wish to work and buy stamps with the money earned; the 'Hustling Committee' who work all their extra time. 62

El Paso Herald, April 16, 1918, p. 12.

Lamar School is proud of its former students who fought for their country. In World War I, James (Buster) Biggs, an ex-Lamar student, lost his life. The Biggs Air Force Base was named for him. Those who were killed in World War II and have a Gold Star at Lamar in their memory are: Richard Billman, A.K. Brooks, Henry Barrett, George Beys, Edward Marceyra, Jack McCarthy, Robert Samaniego, and William Dean Hawkins (El Paso's only Congressional Medal of Honor Winner in World War II.). 63

Lamar School Records.

Parent-Teacher Association

The Parent-Teacher Association was organized at Lamar
School on May 22, 1919 and has played an active part in the history of the school. Some of the many projects undertaken during the years are: the annual Hallowe'en Carnival, a Fathers' Night Program each term; parties for the members of the graduating classes and the Patrol Boys in January and in May; Get-Acquainted Luncheon for the faculty and new mothers each term; Christmas parties in all classrooms; sponsors of the Girl Scout and Brownie Troops. The Lamar Parent-Teacher Association has bought for the school: a movie machine and screen; a ditto machine for the office; curtain and drapes for the auditorium; warm gloves for the Patrol Boys, a steam table and wall clock for the cafeteria, an electric milk cooler for the cafeteria. The P.T.A. and the School Board shared the cost of the inter-communication system, the cyclone fence put around the school grounds, and the lighting of the playground. The Lamar P.T.A. was the first to sponsor a Pre-School Group in El Paso. Besides helping with many of the school's activities and programs, the mothers have presented plays at night to entertain their children and to raise funds for their projects. Two of the plays were "Gold Dust" and "Just for Justine."

When Mrs. Empress Arrington, who had been principal of Lamar School since 1922 and who had served for forty years with the public schools, retired in May, 1940, the
P.T.A. held a reception in her honor. The reception was held in the school auditorium from 7:30 to 9:30 and was attended by a large crowd of men and women who had had Mrs. Arrington as a teacher or as a principal.

---

Ibid.

---

Early records of the P.T.A. were lost, but the following mothers had served as president during the early years: Mrs. James A. Pickett, Mrs. P.D. Rice, Mrs. L.W. Erwin, Mrs. C. L. North, Mrs. G.A. Young, Mrs. G.E. Crysler, Mrs. J.E. Woods, Mrs. William Wehner, Mrs. Oscar J. Allen, and Mrs. S. L. Plumbley. Those who served in recent years were:

- 1938-1939 Mrs. J.W. Oliverson
- 1939-1940 Mrs. H. F. Flosi
- 1940-1941 Mrs. L. R. Harding
- 1941-1942 Mrs. D. P. Wilbanks
- 1942-1943 Mrs. Henry Lowe
- 1943-1944 Mrs. P. M. Kelly
- 1944-1945 Mrs. V.T. Abbott
- 1945-1946 Mrs. Drew Davis
- 1946-1947 Mrs. Oscar Amadore
- 1947-1948 Mrs. R. E. Barlow
- 1948-1949 Mrs. L. W. Broughton
- 1949-1950 Mrs. R. E. Escajeda
- 1950-1951 Mrs. A. H. Witholder
- 1951-1952 Mrs. Joe Salas
- 1952-1953 Mrs. Joe Salas (second term)
- 1953-1954 Mrs. J. Hurley
- 1954-1955 Mrs. C. V. Rutledge
- 1955-1956 Mrs. Toby Tovar

These names were compiled from the P.T.A. historian's book and scrap-book.
Miscellaneous Items of Interest

During the year 1913-1914, the El Paso Herald each day published a paragraph on "The Students of the El Paso Schools," dealing with the activities in the various schools. In December, several of the paragraphs were about Lamar School.

One of the live organizations in Lamar School is the Webster-Haynes Debating Club of the high eighth grade. This club meets every Friday afternoon after school and alternately holds debates and conducts parliamentary drill.

Charles Thurston is the president. The judges are appointed for the debates from the members of the club and the meetings are conducted with parliamentary rules. The president, Charles Thurston, represented the grammar schools of the city in the annual oratorical contest held at Austin, Texas.

Lamar School has reason to be proud of its football teams. For three years this school has won the grammar school championship of the city. For two years the football team has been undefeated - and only two times have they been scored against, once this year and one time last season. Lamar School has played the larger grammar school teams - but has always won. It has defeated the Junior High School team and the second Y.M.C.A. team.

The girl basketball players of Lamar School have made a most excellent record this season. Not once has this team been defeated. The boys of the school have taken as great an interest in
the team's success as the girls and have attended the games in good-sized crowds to cheer the girls to victory. 68

68
Ibid., December 14, 1914, p. 4.

Lamar is the only school in the city to have a Boys' Glee Club. The club was formed several years ago with the best singers among upper grade boys. They have sung on many programs and have formed the choruses of the operas given at the school. 69

69
Ibid., December 16, 1914, p. 4.

Opera programs are given twice a year in the auditorium of Lamar. El Paso is the only city in which this feature is included in the school work. The idea originated with the principal, Miss Alice Fitzpatrick. So successful were the programs with the Lamar School children that last year children of the eighth grades of Vilas, Bailey, and San Jacinto were invited to participate.

The children study the principal choruses of the opera to be given and then the most prominent musicians of the city sing the solos and duets, while Mrs. W. R. Brown of the Music Department of the Woman's Club narrates the story of the opera. 70

70
Ibid., December 17, 1914, p. 4.

In the Lamar P.T.A. scrap-book was found an interesting clipping from the El Paso Times for November, 1954.

The two first grades of Lamar School were taken to the Police Pistol Range for "Operation Small Fry." Here some on tricycles and some as pedestrians are taught how to cross the streets with the light signals. Small light signals are used.
Another clipping from the *El Paso Herald-Post* for November, 1953 found in the P.T.A. scrap-book:

The Lamar School Orchestra composed of thirty-nine children under the direction of Albert A. Petersen will give a concert for the P.T.A. at the November meeting. 71

Superintendent R. J. Tighe of the El Paso Public Schools praised Lamar students for their efficient fire drill. He said that they had broken the fire drill record as they had cleared the building in 47 seconds; formerly it had taken 61 seconds. 72

**El Paso Herald, October 31, 1913, p.7.**

The last class of high eighths to graduate from Lamar School held their graduation exercises on May 28, 1916. In the fall, the eighth grades were to attend El Paso High School.

Graduation exercises for the high eighth grade at Lamar School will be held Monday afternoon at two o'clock in the auditorium. The program will consist of two parts. The first will consist of a Greek play, "The Return of Ulysses," adapted from Stephen Philip's "Ulysses." The scenes will be laid in the interior of Ulysses' palace and in the banquet hall.

The second part of the program will open with an esthetic dance, "Le Secret", danced
by Ila Mae McChesney, Emmie Wheatley, Marie Kerr, and Rachel Boynton.

"The Cowboy's Dream" will be sung by a chorus of cowboys in a cowboy camp scene.

The students of the seventh and eighth grades will sing "Texas."

The certificates of promotion to the high school will be presented to the high eighth graduates by the principal, Miss Alice Fitzpatrick.

---


Miss Bertha Calder, a grand-daughter of Mirabeau B. Lamar, is teaching the high second grade at Lamar School.

74 El Paso Herald, December 22, 1914, p.4.

The stereoptican machine at Lamar was the first to be bought by an elementary school. It was paid for by a series of illustrated lectures given by R. J. Tighe, then Superintendent of the El Paso Public Schools. The slides for the machine were bought with money raised in various ways by the pupils, teachers, and patrons.

75 Records of the Administrative Office.
CONCLUSION

Lamar School has the distinction of having been the first of the elementary schools to obtain the following:

- School grounds with a definite, distinctive plan;
- Cement yard seats and fountains;
- Stereoptican machine and 600 slides;
- A victrola;
- A school paper;
- School opera programs;
- A school orchestra;
- A boys' glee club;
- An annual.

Although the El Paso Public School System has added eighteen new elementary schools since Lamar School was built, and although the City of El Paso has continued to grow eastward and the population of Lamar School has changed, the spirit of loyalty, ambition, and co-operation is still a distinctive characteristic of the students, teachers, and parents of Lamar School. The school building was given a new exterior paint job in the fall of 1949, and Lamar School is still a fine-looking school, a credit to the El Paso Public School System, and serves its district well.
### Principals of Lamar School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1906 - 1920</td>
<td>Miss Alice Fitzpatrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920 - 1922</td>
<td>Miss Alicia Swann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922 - 1940</td>
<td>Mrs. Empress Arrington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 - 1942</td>
<td>Mr. Guy McNeil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942 - 1943</td>
<td>Miss Josephine Stueber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943 - 1945</td>
<td>Miss Dorothy Emig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 - 1948</td>
<td>Mrs. Olga Pool Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948 - 1949</td>
<td>Mr. R.L. Springer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949 - 1950</td>
<td>Mr. Hibbard Polk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 - 1952</td>
<td>Mr. P.L. Haney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952 - 1954</td>
<td>Mr. J.V. Groce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954 - 1955</td>
<td>Mr. Carold Jackson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### First Faculty 1906 - 1907

- Frances Bills
- Sallie Blakesley
- Jean Borum
- Bessie Roe
- Alberta Heep
- Sophia Gilchrist
- Edith Giddings
- Anna Washburn
- Emma Hoffman
- Alice Fitzpatrick - Principal

### Faculty 1908 - 1909

- Allene Howren
- Emma Lee Lott
- Cora McDonald
- Edith Giddings
- Alberta Heep
- Mabel Cummings
- Sophia Gilchrist
- Mazie Cole
- Zuma Hartfield
- Lillian Cole
- A. Fitzpatrick - Prin.
Faculty - 1909 - 1910
Lillian Cole
Zuma Hartfield
Mazie Cole
Sophia Gilchrist
Alberta Heep
Maud Caspary
Alta Craig
Eva McDonald
Edith Giddings
Florence Goddard
Mary J. White
Eunice Payne
Allene Howren
Lucille Pearce
Mary Henry
A. Fitzpatrick - Prin.

Faculty 1915 - 1916
Bessie Hall
Edith Giddings
Lillian Cole
Maude Strickland
Mae Pulliam
Margaret Jones
Mary Henry
Laura Nelson
Elizabeth Calder
Dove Husbands
Kate Mulcahy
Maude Nevels
Helen Lucas
Eva Stapleton
Lucille Cowan
Vera Hunt
Pauline Krenz
Mary Andrew (cadet)
A. Fitzpatrick - Prin.

Faculty 1918 - 1919
May Anderson
Lillian Cole
Eva Stapleton
Vera Hunt
Maude Nevels
Margaret Jones
Laura Nelson
Lela Dodson
Estelle Berrien

A. Fitzpatrick - Prin.
Faculty 1921 - 1922

Anna Washburn
May Anderson
Lillian Cole
Della Kiefer
Marguerite Iverson
Mabel Gray
Mamie Young
Annie Silverstein
Mary Neighbors
Mabel Keeney
Bernice Judkins
Margaret Jones
Thalia Gillett
Clyde Duncan
Kate Krause
Alicia Swann - Prin.

Faculty 1928 - 1929

Lillian Corcoran
Georgia West
Lillian Cole
Verna Kergan
Jessie Cook
Mary McCarthy
Frances Muirhead
Virginia Kirkpatrick
Dorothea Montgomery
Margaret Scott
Mabel Hall
Minnie Donovan
Anne Windberg
Gertrude Scoggins
Charlotte Crawford
Rowena Worrell
Effie Douglas
Myrtle Huffman
Margaret Jones
Hilda Light
Edna Williams
Wilma Scotten
Gladys McCarthy
Thomas Brenmand
Empress Arrington - Prin.

Faculty 1933 - 1934

Georgia West
Elizabeth Dunne
Lillian Cole
Jessie Cook
Frances Stout
Virginia Kirkpatrick
Mary Tidwell
Violet Thurston
Mabel Hall

Minnie Donovan
Wilma Scotten
Anne Windberg
Charlotte Crawford
Rowena Worrell
Effie Douglas
Margaret Jones
Hilda Light
Edna Williams

E. Arrington - Prin.
Faculty 1939 - 1940
Alta Stowell
Jessie Cook
Lillian Cole
Elizabeth McKinney
Verna Thew
Virginia Kirkpatrick
Sallie Blake
Minnie Donovan
Mabel Hall
Pauline Polser
Charlotte Crawford
Anne Windberg
Wilma Scotten
Margaret Jones
Guy McNeil
Hilda Light
Edna Williams
Elizabeth Boylan (Office)
E. Arrington - Prin.

Faculty 1940 - 1941
Alta Stowell
Jessie Cook
Lillian Cole
Elizabeth McKinney
Verna Thew
Catherine O'Malley
Sallie Blake
Minnie Donovan
Pauline Hayden
Mabel Hall
Anne Windberg
Charlotte Crawford
Margaret Jones
Wilma Scotten
Troy Fincher
Edna Williams
Hilda Light
Mary Nell Hatch (Office)
Guy McNeil - Prin.

Faculty 1942 - 1943
Alta Stowell
Jessie Cook
Verna Thew
Catherine O'Malley
Minnie Donovan
Sallie Blake
Georgia Sherrill
Mabel Hall
Edith Engle
Sallie Howell
Margaret Jones
Hilda Light
Juel Downs
Anne Windberg
Wilma Scotten
Edna Williams
Bert Olliverson (Office)
Josephine Stueber - Prin.

Faculty 1944 - 1945
Jean Sibert
Alta Stowell
Eleanor Outlaw
Catherine O'Malley
Verna Thew
Mabel Hall
Sallie Blake
Minnie Donovan
Elaine Nagley
Mary Allbaugh
Anne Windberg
Joyce Garthehaite
Edna Williams
Wilma Scotten
Dorothy Emig - Prin.
Faculty 1947 - 1948

Ann Lawhon
Emily Perry
Verna Thew
Frances Turrentine
Mabel Hall
Minnie Donovan
Leona Purvis
Barbara Henry
Hazel Huckaby
Maurine Snodgrass
Emmie Alexander
Anne Windberg
Edna Williams
Mildred Broom
Mary Schaeppi (Office)
Olga Wilson - Prin.

Faculty 1949 - 1950

Inez Arnold
Pauline Ater
Dane Bowen
Colleen Dakan
Minnie Donovan
Cleo Engler
Barbara Henry
Marguerite Kelley
Betty Lockwood
Elizabeth Neugebauer
Emily Perry
Joyce Rematore
Maurine Snodgrass
Verna Thew
Frances Turrentine
Edna Williams
Anne Windberg
Harriet Gerber (Office)
Hibbard Polk - Prin.

Faculty 1950 - 1951

Albert Messer
Inez Arnold
Marie Riediger
Mary Alice Council
Minnie Donovan
Mary Dunagan
Muriel Gillespie
Marguerite Kelly
Betty Lockwood
Frances Lowrance
Betty Neugebauer
Emily Perry
Rose Porter
Hannah Selig
Maurine Snodgrass
Verna Thew
Edna Williams
Anne Windberg
Alline Whitaker (Office)
P.L. Haney - Prin.

Faculty 1952 - 1953

Julia Samaniego
Florence Leishman
Virginia Warren
Louise Hartwick
Renee Gholz
Minnie Donovan
Inez Gilland
Docia Lackey
Virginia Reed
Valilyan Strain
Susie O'Neill
Maurine Snodgrass
H.C. Hinton
Edna Williams
Anne Windberg
Carol Merrick
Clarice Knight
Gilbert Dominguez
Wanda Hiday (Office)
J. Verl Groce - Prin.
Faculty 1954 - 1955

Maxine Bell
Arielia Mitchell
Virginia Warren
Renee Gholz
Louise Hartrick
Inez Gilland
Minnie Donovan
Docia Lackey
May Cousar
Susie O'Neill
Maurine Snodgrass
Edna Williams
Anne Windberg
H.C. Hinton
Carol Merrick
Blanche White
Doris Holmsley
Harriet Gerber (Office)
Carol Jackson - Prin.
INTERVIEWS

Miss Minnie Donovan began teaching at Lamar School in the fall of 1923 and is teaching there at present.

Miss Dorothy Emig was principal of Lamar School from 1943 to 1945. She became principal of Houston School in the fall of 1945 and holds that position at the present time.

Mrs. Belle Howell taught the blind children in a class at Lamar School from 1924 until 1941 when the class was moved to Bailey School. Mrs. Howell is retired now.

Mrs. Alberta Heep Morse was a member of the first Lamar School faculty. She became principal of Sunset School in 1921. She was principal of Vilas School when she retired.

Miss Alicia Swann was principal of Lamar School from 1920 until 1922. She became principal of Crockett School in the fall of 1923 and remained in that position until her retirement.
Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar

Mirabeau B. Lamar was born in Louisville, Georgia on August 16, 1798. He was named by an eccentric bachelor uncle, Zachariah Lamar, who lived with the family and named all the sons after celebrities of history and literature.

Mirabeau was sent to school at the age of six, but his nervous, impetuous temperament rendered unbearable the routine of school and he did not like to study. Not until he reached maturity did he learn the value and power of knowledge. His reading, wide though unsystematic and independent of academic walls, was responsible for Lamar's large fund of varied information, as well as for his polished literary style which stamped him in later years as "highly cultured" in the eyes of the Texas frontiersmen.

In 1819, he moved to Alabama and joined William Allen in the publication of the Cahawba Press and began his keen interest in politics. He returned to Georgia after a few years to become private secretary to Governor Troup. He married Tabitha Jordan on January 1, 1826 and moved to Columbus, Georgia. After his wife's death in 1830, Lamar spent two years in travel. He visited Texas and decided
to settle there. At the Battle of San Jacinto he fought as a private with the Texas army.

From that point Lamar's rise was rapid. First, he was appointed Secretary of War under President Sam Houston; then in 1836 he was elected Vice-President of the Republic of Texas. On December 10, 1838, he was inaugurated President of the Republic.

In his first message to Congress, he said his famous words:

Cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy, and while guided and controlled by virtue, it is the noblest attribute of man. It is the only dictator that freemen acknowledge, and the only security which freemen desire. The present is a propitious moment to lay the foundation of a great moral and intellectual edifice, which will in after ages be hailed as the chief ornament and blessing of Texas.

At his insistence Congress passed a bill establishing the Texas Public School System on January 26, 1839. His foresight laid the foundation for the educational system of Texas. The schools of Texas today stand as the tangible as well as the symbolical monuments to Lamar.

Mirabeau B. Lamar died on December 19, 1959.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Newspapers

El Paso Times, El Paso, Texas, 1954

Records

Lamar School Records, El Paso, Texas.
Records of the Administrative Office of the Public Schools, El Paso, Texas.