

BY THE JOURNALISM CLASS AND MR. L. H. GRIFFIN

The Hooks Independent School District, as it is now known, is made up of seven former school districts; Everett, Water Valley, Antioch, Collom, Bellows, Myrtle Springs, and a part of Concord. Each of these was a common school district up until the time they were consolidated with Hooks. Hooks was itself, a common school district until 1923 when it was made an independent school district.

We will give a brief history of each of the original school districts and then a history of the combined schools as they now exist. The story of the first school in the Hooks District was recalled by Mr. K. W. Ball. According to Mrs. Ball, the first school building in this district was a small one room, log house with a stick and dirt chimney. Stoves were unknown in these early buildings and this building had a large fireplace which covered almost the entire side of the room. The furnishings of the Myrtle Springs School were very crude and consisted mostly of split-log benches without any desks at all. The teacher did not even have a desk and no one had every dreamed of a blackboard in a school room of this type. Near the school was a spring from which the children secured their drinking water. This spring was call Myrtle Springs because of the beautiful myrtle growing around it and from this the school secured its name. Mrs. Ball tells of her experience of trying to stay in school all day and she says that she would get tired of staying in school and want to see her Mother. She would ask the teacher to let her go and get a drink and then grab her bonnet, which hung just outside of the school on a wooden peg, and then she would run as rapidly as she possibly could to her home. Her only book in this early school was a speller which served as a history, geography, and an arithmetic. The first teacher in this school was a Mr. Selby who was very fortunate in that he not only earned a large salary (sometimes as much as \$15 per month), but he also owned a large amount of land. The next teacher was a Mr. Galbreath and some of the pupils in this school were Billy Lee, Jimmy Fort, Leola Smith, Will Smith, Minerva Hooks, and Josie Hooks. There was no such thing as a trustee in those times and it seems that school was not held for several years after this school taught by Mr. Galbreath. The next school was taught in the home of Mrs. Ball who had the honor of teaching the first public free school in that section of the county. She taught about ten pupils in her home, and in addition to these she had several who paid their own tuition which amounted to \$4 each. She taught from 1875 to 1877. We find this school next taught in a building on the land of Warren Hooks, which is now known as the McCutcheon place, by a Miss Betsy Watlington. Miss Watlington's home was in the North and when she secured this school she had expected to find a large school, but when she arrived at the place she was sadly disappointed to find out how small a school Myrtle Springs really was. Largely owing to the disappointment over the site of this school, she taught only one session and she was followed by Jim Mahaffey who was succeeded by a Mr. Tarrance, who in turn was succeeded by Miss Mary Simms.

The Myrtle Springs School was then moved from the Warren Hooks place to the present E. H. (Doc) Smith farm. The furnishings in this school were very crude and very scarce. The first teacher in this school was Jim Mahaffey and

then after him the following teachers taught there: Richard Merrill, Susie Joplin, Jack Watlington, Bill Turnage, Mr. Bellows, and Rebecca Hampton Mitchell. A division occurred in the school after a disagreement, and another school was held in the little village of Hooks. This school at Hooks was taught in the summer in an old store building and in the winter, school was taught in a residence just back of the Dwain Balmain home. Some of the teachers in this school were: Charles Hooks, a Mr. Caten, and Miss Minnie Leigh. Some of the trustees during this time were John Cuthberson, Dick Elliott, J. O. McCutcheon, and K. W. Ball. The trustees became involved in a dispute over the employment of a teacher, and it is rumored that one of the trustees became so angry that he burned the school building on the present E. H. (Doc) Smith place. For four or five years after this school was burned, no school was held at this place, and it is said that they were afraid to build back because the trustee has sworn to burn every school that was built.

Finally, the small school operating at Hooks was consolidated with the Myrtle Springs School, and a new building was erected about 1/4 mile southeast of the school which was burned. This building was erected on land donated by Mrs. Colie Moore and after it had served for several years as a building for the white school, it was used for a number of years as a building for the Negro school. The teachers at this school were Addie Bell, Elizabeth McCright, Mary Walker, Mattie Centry, Lillie Warren, Susie Rosser, Cora Mendinghal, Will Weaver, Mr. Caudle, D. O. Harper, Beulah Palmer, and a Mr. Roberts.

Many humorous incidents are recalled in regard to the school that were taught in this building. Mr. Roberts was a very elderly gentleman, and the children delighted in making chalk marks on his back. It seems that one of the teacher's favorite way of punishing children was to pull their hair. It so happened that a boy had typhoid fever, and all of his hair came out. The parents of the boy did not especially like this teacher, so the rumor went around the community that this boy had all of his hair pulled out by the teacher. A favorite trick of the pupils to annoy their teachers was to put pins in their toenails and stick the pupil in front of them, by slipping down gently in their seats and giving the one in front a terrific punch. Of course, this called for more hair pulling.

Some of the trustees of this school were J. F. Smith, Dave Moore, H. F. Borcharding, J. W. Smith, J. B. Dagnal, J. W. Morris, and R. S. Nichols.

According to Mr. Tom Mozingo, the first school at Water Valley was erected in 1887. This was a one room, boxed building 28 by 40 feet. It was decided that this building was not large enough, so the citizens got together and erected another school building on one acre of land donated by P. S. Ramsey. The people donated the work and the only hired man on the job was a carpenter to act as an overseer. The first teacher in this building was Irdis Evan who was followed by Emma Adams. Miss Adams came to the country for her health, and she taught school while recuperating. This school did not have enough pupils for a teacher so it was abandoned for a period and the pupils attended school at Antoich and at Concord. In 1910 school was resumed at Water Valley and the building was moved about two miles northeast to the Old Boston-Texarkana Road. The teachers here were Clyde Merritt, Emma Jarrett, Finis Johnson, Jenks Johnson, Irene Tiller, L. O. Chasteen, Edith Pride, Iva Mae Elliott, Bessie Webster,

V. F. Allen, W. P. Brewer, Artie Richardson, Lester Carr, C.C. Stingley, Mrs. Lester Carr, Hugh Ely, and Virgie Pierce. In 1926, the school had grown until another teacher was added and a new building, meeting all the state aid requirements was erected. Some of the teachers at this school were C. C. Stingley, Mae Reynolds, Lee Brown, Novelle Hudgins, Mrs. C. D. Lynn, V. A. Pounds, Stella Anderson, and Floy Shipp. Some of the trustees who served in this school were H. C. Williamson, W. A. Reed, G. W. Tiller, P.S. Ramsey, A. J. Mazingo, A. T. Satterfield, T. A. Mazingo, A. L. Elliott, A. L. Hawkings, C. L. Stilson, W. A. Walraven, and Fay Stevens.

In 1932, Water Valley consolidated with Hooks for high school purposes only, but the school continued to drop in numbers until in 1935 the remainder of the school was consolidated with Hooks and the old school building was torn down and used in the construction of the new gymnasium at Hooks.

According to Miss Maggie Allen, who wrote the entire history of the Antioch Community, a school building was erected southwest of Antioch in 1860. This school was called the Collom School and some of the teachers in this early school were a Mr. Woods, a Mr. Shackelford, Jack Watlington, Jimmie Allen, and Mrs. Bowden. After the school was taught by Mrs. Bowden, the Collom School was abandoned and it was replaced by the Bellows School.

The Bellows School was first taught in a private dwelling by a Mr. Rufner, Mr. Bellows was the next teacher in this school and in 1881 when the frame building was erected to take the place of the private dwelling, the school was named Bellows School in honor of their teacher. The first teacher in this new building was Mr. A. B. Rosser. The next year there were not enough pupils to maintain the school, and Miss Mary Rosser taught in the home of Dabney Allen, who served as a trustee. She first started her school in the school building, but when she saw that the enrollment was not going to be large enough to maintain a school, she taught a subscription school in the private home. Miss Rosser was practically an invalid and it was necessary for Mr. Allen to carry her to school each day in a carriage. When she arrived at school, she lay upon a cot most of the day and it is said that even though she was an invalid, she severely punished her pupils. It was customary for her to call the pupils to her bed, and then to give them a good whipping. John Cuthbertson was the only other teacher to teach at Bellows School after Miss Rosser. The Bellows School was then moved to Antioch.

In 1887 a one room, frame building was erected at Antioch and school was started. The teachers in this school were Mattie Runnels, G. C. Abell, who later became a doctor, Wiley Balthrop, Harvey Rathburn, W. D. Winston, G. C. Kates, Inez Hellman, Mona Dalby, Bobbie Hart, Conley Ragland, Will Weaver, J. B. Lytal, who later became county superintendent and county judge, Irene Garland, E. E. Meadows, Harvey Echols, O. B. Akin, Nan Goaa, Harry Hughes, Essie Wilds, Sweetie Morris, Myrtle Morris, Virgie Elliott, Jesses Burnham, a Mr. Roberts, Jim Johnson, Ruth Nelson, Finis Johnson, Mina Shelton, Iva Mae Elliott, and Ollie Nelson. Some of the trustees who served in this school were B. W. Tiller, J.J. Allen, Abe Reed, T. F. Lynn, Reeves Elliott, Joe Reed, S. J. Reed, W. C. Allen, W. E. Jackson, Abe Reed, Jr., and Joe Wyatt. In 1925, Antioch was consolidated with the Hooks Independent School District.

In 1917, the Everett school district was founded. This district was a part of the original Rosborough school district and since the Rosborough district did not maintain a white school, some of the white citizens in the district felt that a white school was needed. The extreme west end of the Rosborough district was cutoff, and the Everett district was formed. This District was organized through the efforts of J. A. Cranfill, V. I. Kyles, Fred Buy, and others. This school was consolidated with the Hooks Independent School District in 1932 for high school purposes, and in 1936 the entire school was consolidated with Hooks.

In 1919, the people who lived in the Whaley community, which was on the extreme west side of the Hooks Common School District, requested the Hooks School Board to give them a school in their community. The school board did not feel that they would be able to finance the erection of a building, but the school district would furnish the teachers. A sum of \$875 was secured by public subscription to pay for the material for the building and work was donated by the citizens of the community. The teachers who taught in this school were Mrs. Bessie George, Lula Creed, Lutta Mathewson, Mary Leigh Ellis, Nora O'Brien, Alvin Johnson, R. W. Dalby, and Annie Johnson. In 1929, it seemed that the people could not agree on the maintenance of their school so the Hooks School Board agreed to put on a bus and bring the children from the Whaley School to Hooks, in that year the school was abandoned.

When the old Myrtle Springs School was moved to Hooks in 1914, a four-room, two story brick building was erected on the present site of the Hooks High School. In discussing the moving of this school site, some of the older citizens recalled that the fight was a very bitter one. Of course, this was before the time of the automobile, and two men in the community used their wagons and teams all day to carry voters to the polls to vote for moving the school building.

The first teachers in this school were L. L. Chapman, Beatrice Morris, Ara Kennedy, Helen Elliott, Maud Hendricks, Dona Barrow, Lula Springer, H. J. Hall, J. H. Lewis, Mildred Williams, James Wilkerson, J. K. Johnson, L. H. Griffin, Mrs. John C. Lynn, J. P. Jones, Lutta Mathewson, Mrs. J. K. Johnson, and a Mr. Davis. In 1924 the top story of the old building was removed and five additional classrooms were added. The lower floor of the old building was used as an auditorium. Then in 1929, a new auditorium was built and the old auditorium was divided into two classrooms. In 1933, two additional classrooms were added. That year Mr. Mary Moore Reed taught at Hooks for the first time. Mrs. Reed was principal of Hooks High School from 1932 until 1938. Other teachers who came to Hooks in 1932 were Mrs. Jack Reed and Mrs. Opal Smith.

Mrs. Reed recalls that teachers came to school at 7 a.m. and often would not leave until after dark. "I can remember coming to school with a flashlight many mornings", Mrs. Reed said.

The school owned three school buses to transport the students who lived in rural areas to school. Because of the bad roads, many of the students didn't get home until 7 o'clock at night. In 1933, the school applied for and received classification and affiliation. The twelfth grade was also added to the system

this year, and many of the students who thought that they had graduated the year before came back to Hooks to receive the additional year of education. Mr. L. H. Griffin, present superintendent of Hooks school system, was then superintendent, teacher, and coach for Hooks High School.

The Hooks school building was destroyed by fire in 1935. Classes were held at various places throughout Hooks. The first and second grades were held in the old Community Church building which was located south of the railroad in front of what is now Perry Smith's store.

The fourth grade was in the building that now houses the washeteria. The fifth grade was taught in a seed house located about where the telephone office is now located. The teachers who were doing departmental work walked from the school to classes in the various buildings and back to the school more than once a day.

The school was rebuilt on the present site during the years 1935-1936. It was constructed with WPA money. The former auditorium in the west wing was changed into classrooms. Mrs. Mary Moore Reed was the principal, Mr. Ivey C. Gantt succeeded Mrs. Reed as principal. With a grant of \$6,000 by the Texas State Legislature, a gym was built with an auditorium.

When Red River Arsenal was located in the Hooks vicinity, the schools became overcrowded. Through the Federal Works Agency, the present High School and east Hooks Elementary buildings were constructed to house the many new students. The school buildings were constructed in September, 1943 at a cost of \$225,000 including the furniture and equipment for the new, completely modern buildings. Funds from both buildings and equipment were supplied by the Federal Government. The federal Public Housing Authority assisted with the planning and supervision of the construction. Mr. H. B. Pemberton was superintendent of schools during this building program. He served a superintendent of the Hooks schools until 1947.

Mr. S. B. Culpepper, former deputy superintendent, served as superintendent of the schools from 1947 until 1950, when he resigned to accept a position with the Texas State Teachers' Association in Austin. During Mr. Culpepper term as superintendent, the high school and East Hooks buildings were purchased from the government at a cost of \$10,000, including furniture, equipment, and land.

Football at Hooks High School was reorganized through the efforts of Mr. Culpepper with Mr. Jeff Addison as head coach and Mr. R. C. Dodd as assistant coach. The Hornet Football Stadium was constructed the same year on the East Hooks Elementary School Campus.

The first Band in the history of the Hooks school was organized during January of 1950 with Mr. Norman White as director.

Mr. L. H. Griffin became superintendent in 1950 after serving as county superintendent for fifteen and a half years. A completely new and modern Negro school was constructed in 1951-52 after the old Negro school burned. This is the first school term that it has been occupied.

The present school system consists of a faculty of 39 white teachers, including three vocational teachers, and 14 Negro teachers, including two vocational teachers. The total enrollment of the Hooks schools for the 1952 school term is 1,305 students. The present trustees of the school are Mr. Harry Allen, Mr. James Graves, Mr. H. F. Borcharding, Mr. Carrol D. Jackson, Mr. Horace Brown, Mr. Joe Smith, and Mr. R. W. Lumbley.

The Hooks public schools have progressed from a small one-room and one-teacher school to the modern present day system---one of the largest systems in Bowie County.