

First School in Spearman TX Written by Susie Pierce Dacus  
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This review of the first Spearman school is presented to Spearman Reporter readers with a genuine love for the people, the school and the land of Hansford County Texas. It has to do with the opening of the school, its first pupils, its triumphs and defeats. Data is taken from the old school Annual-the Wild Rose.

Once a banner hung in the study hall of the old wooden high school building. It represented a victory (second place) in basketball for the Spearman High School Girls team. They won it at Dalhart TX in a Tri-State Tournament.

Today the area is most proud of the present Spearman School system, its scholastic progress, its athletic prowess just as they were in the beginning. Congratulations and may the town, the school and the land continue in its growth and development.

## OLD HANSFORD

The Village of Hansford, the County seat of Hansford County Texas was cupped like a gem in a signet of hills. It was a beautiful setting for a town, but the Sante Fe Railway bypassed it in favor of the flat prairie land east of town. Model-T automobiles made the drag around the rut filled court house square, carrying the young fry, while the oldsters on the side lines commented per usual, "What's the world coming to?" The Palo Duro Creek cut across the meadowland west and to the northeast of the little town. A bridge spanned the creek to connect with the roads to Texhoma and Guymon, Oklahoma, and local homes on the "flats". Townspeople spoke of their neighbors as from "up the creek, down the creek". Or from the "north flats or south flats". Ochiltree was some twenty-five miles east of Hansford. Dumas a "wide place in the road" was southwest in Moore County. Still farther, and across the Canadian River and then some, Amarillo, nursling of the prairie, was the future metropolis of the plain.

A young Chicago promoter ventured to the plains, and tried to promote a railroad called the E. O & W. from Dalhart TX, via Dumas, Lieb (Jarvis), Hansford, and Ochiltree and on to Enid Oklahoma. After much

speculation, money raising and planning the project failed. Many people lost their money and possibly trust in future railroad. A few "I Told you So" folk, felt lucky that they had kept their money in their jeans.

Hack loads of boosters from Hansford and Ochiltree drove to neighboring towns advertising the proposed venture. One Panhandle real estate dealer made a famous quote that if railroad came through "land would eventually sell for as much as \$75 per acre." A decade later the Santa Fe Railway Company ran a spur from Shack, Okla., across the country to terminate at a new town site to be located several miles east of Old Hansford. The Citizens of the town decided to leave the old for the new and participated in the lot sale going on at the proposed town site. Each time they drove out to the new project they ere reminded of Mr. Weist and his E. O. & W. railroad by the pine stakes drives along the old right of way he engineered.

The name of Spearman was chosen in honor of a Santa Fe official in Chicago and J.B. Tower, local sign painter (JB Tower married Rhoda Wilbanks Overton, editor) was chosen to make the new signs to be placed at teach entrance to the city. The sign was an Indian warrior in breechcloth and with a feather in his hair. He held a spear in his hand. The bold letters beneath him read "Welcome to Spearman"

## THE FIRST SPEARMAN SCHOOL

The old three storied wooden structure used as public school system at Hansford had seen better days. The window panes were broken, the belfry, with its tolling bell that once gave out peals of welcome, to reluctant feet, was about the fall apart. Only two rooms were in use when the movers came to tow the building to its new home.

School started about a month late in October 1920 to accommodate the face lifting and innovations made to take care of the influx of new students. For the first time in several years, the four rooms on the first floor were utilized. The second reached by a new stairway, help a study hall, office, and two recitation rooms, and wonder of wonders-a new laboratory-our superintendents pride and joy. The IOOF utilized the third floor. The old wooden rickety stairway on the outside of the building was torn away as a safety hazard. This was the stairwell that the pupils often ran up and down to peer into the large windows By the end of the season progress was made and it brought notices from the surrounding area and

soon students from adjoining counties were entering to take advantage of new addition acquired by the hard word of W.A. Clark, Jr, superintendent.

Faculty Members: Ethel Deakin, Mathematics, Nellie Hard Principal, English, history; Nannie Holland, Foreign Language, Coach; Mattie \_\_\_lor, substitutes; Aline Beck, Almira McComas, lower grades; School Board: AF Barkley, President; H James, Sec. Treas; HL Wilbanks, Asector; Alvino Richeson and DW Hazlewood, members.

First Students: Seniors: Beatrice Gibner and Stoney McMurry. Juniors Hazel Lowe and Lena Dacus. Sophomores: Burgher Pirtle, Winnie Dacus, Della Dacus, Zela Cross, CL Hazlewood, Grace Pirtle and Lillie Maize. Freshman: Bernice Burran, Myrtle Ballentine, Viola Hill, Sarah and Art Cusenbasry, Mae Raney, O Cross, May Faus, Susie Pierce, Irene Kerr, Paul Maulsby, Warner Davis. Barney Sparks, HA Hartshort, Mattie Hartshorn.

Grammar School 1920-21 Classes for the first Spearman term started with the following students as class officers: President, Juanita Haney; Vice President, Pope Gibner; JB Cooke, Treasurer, (soon to be our beloved county Sheriff) and Olivette Hancock, Secretary;

Students: Girls: Minnie martin, Pauline Lowe, Mynle Womble, Gertrude Keim, Alta Hays (Toots), Opal Cline, Nellie Fullbright' Boys: Joe Raney, Paul Thompson, TH McMurry, WH Black, Wade Tackitt. Special Students: Rufus Raney, Ralls Richardson, Early Ford and Lura Bell Raney.

Social Activities: The Spearman High School student body started off the new term with a Halloween part in the High School Building. The rooms were decorated with black cats, witches, and goblins made from gold and black paper. Games were played, but fortune telling was the most popular amusement of the evening. In February the Seniors and Sophomores decorated the school rooms with their class colors, purple, gold and white, and entertained the Juniors and Freshman.

In March, the Methodist minister's home was the scene of a delightful party. Victrola music was enjoyed and wedding tours on the moonlit lawn were the chief amusements. Mrs. Z. B. Pirtle, the hostess, served dainty refreshments to a group of happy young people.

Howard Neilson gained a nickname for the rest of his life at this party. He was the first of all the boys to arrive, to find only girls present. Astonished he stammered out "What is this anyway a chicken party?" He was always called "Chick" after that.

Miss Hart invited the High School to her ranch home on the Palo Duro, to a wiener roast. It rained and the road was muddy, but all reached their destination. A huge bon fire was built on the creek bank, and hours of happy games were played, and many roasted franks and marshmallows which were devoured.

### Slumber Parties

Mr. and Mrs.. I.F. Dacus owned and operated the Palo Duro Hotel at Old Hansford, and moved it to Spearman. They were the parents of Leo and Henry (Mutt) Dacus and the 'Dacus" girls, Lena, Della, and Winnie. their home was always open to the young people. More fun was had in their home than anywhere else, it seemed.

Often Mr. and Mrs. Dacus permitted the girls to have slumber parties on the hotel's third floor. Rows of cots lined the wall and the girls romped like tomboys if they chose; or told ghost stories, or danced to the strains of the Victoria, or just plain had fun! Sometimes amusing incidents occurred, perhaps otherwise too. But one in particular lingers in memory.

The girls were retiring, laughing noisily and boisterously. Suddenly the room was still as a tomb. Grace and Bernice were saying their prayers silently beside their bed. About the time they got to the "Amen", Mattie Ruth Berner rose up in bed and shouted, "Who's dead?" No One answered, and she could not see the girls on the opposite side of the bed. Sensing something amiss, Mattie quickly lay back in her bed. Then someone spoke-nothing funny at all but a giggle rippled the atmosphere and all joined in, and then the fun started all over again.

Mattie Ruth and Mable were new additions to the High School from Goetbo, Oklahoma. Mattie made the basketball team.

## School Activities:

Other school activities were enjoyed in the form of Clubs and Dramatic Plays. There were the Latin and Spanish clubs and the Glee Club and the literary Society.

## Plays

Plays were presented to raise funds for various projects: to replenish the Library for example: it grew from 100 to 650 Volumes, to buy basketball suits and equipment, teacher's desk and chairs, and new seats for the study hall.

The Play, "The Kid Betty Wales Girls, and Mr. Kidd" was presented by the Basket Ball Girls at Spearman, and at the Leib School House. New purple and white uniforms were purchased. Middy blouse and box pleated bloomers that seemed to contain yards of material in each leg. White ties dressed them up.

"Aaron Boggs Freshman" was next and a huge success. Good attendance made the show a financial success.

Next, "The Girl and the Flying X" was a huge success. Two townsmen R.T Bucy and L. J. YHillhouse played roles, and Fred Twyman, manager of the Hazel B. Hurd Stock Co., directed the play. Mrs. Twyman played the part of the heroine, and Mr. Twymas the part of "Sputters." Hazel Lowe, Clyde Hazlewood and Lena Dacus were in the cast.

"The Average Man" was presented to the public with a cast of Burgher Pirtle, Winnie Dacus, Lena Dacus, Grace Pirtle, Ruby Little, Guy "Preach" Fuller, Della Dacus, Bernice Burran, and Paul Maulsby.

The first Spearman high School boys and girls were about as normal as apple pie; they wrote notes, threw spit balls, and amused themselves just like the youths of all time.

## Athletics:

Girls Line up for '21 '22: Nannie Holland, coach, Hazel Lowe, captain; Mae Raney, forward, Grace Pirtle, center. Susie Pierce, side center, Winnie

Dacus, Guard. Lena Dacus, Guard. Pauline Low and Mattie Hartschorn were subs.

## Match Games

The first basketball game of the season was played on the Perryton Court. The game was a tie. The playoff gave Perryton one winning point, 20-21. Three weeks later they turned the Spearman call; Spearman won 4-0. November 14, the college from P.A.M.C. played on the Spearman court. Spearman returned their call to win for the first time on another court. Lost 27-41. January 7, a cold day, outdoor court, Spearman won over Ochiltree 12-6. Jan 21, Spearman lost on the Perryton court 8-6. On Jan 8, Spearman played two games. The 1st in the afternoon with Texhoma, Texas at \_\_\_\_ At 20-6. At 7:30 that evening, the fight went on to the swiftest game of the season, a tie for the first half. By the close it yielded a win for the Oklahoman's. The Texas sports enthusiasts were wild with cheers and boos and a wild roar of applause went to the winners. (I think they admired the opponents' strong skill also.) February 4, the teams of Ochiltree and Perryton came to Spearman; they said, "to teach Spearman how to play ball". Spearman won from Ochiltree and played 50 minutes. They then played Perryton and best them 19 points. It was a happy day for Spearman. The merchants set up asd notice. The teams paraded the street with school colors showing!! February 11, Texhoma Oklahoma, called at Spearman to \_\_\_\_ a score of 16-8, in favor of Spearman. The game was played during a blowing sandstorm. The season closed with Texhoma, Oklahoma, winning a \_\_\_\_ 19-5 over Spearman.

## Boys Athletics

At the start of the first season, Coach Davis had a small handful of boys to come for basketball. After two weeks of practice a lineup of players was formed with: Warner Davis, Burgher Pirtle, Clyde Hazlewood, Paul Maulsby and Stonewall McMurry, as Captain. They met in Perryton on their court and lost to them 22-26. December 9th they lost to Goodwell P.A.M.C. 18-33. The next game was played against Perryton on the Spearman Court. They won over Perryton 18-10. The fourth game was a victory over Ochiltree 18-14, and in the fifth they shut Perryton out on their own court at 16-0!! Their two games at Texhoma were fast and

furious. They lost to Texhoma, Texas 18-19. Then won over the Oklahomans 30-16. They played to a gym full of shouting sports enthusiasts. Some were cheering for their own, but also were cheering the Spearman team who displayed great strength and skill. The Texhoma teams were a little on the rough side, trying hard to win. The boys, accustomed to an outdoor court, had much difficulty in adapting to the indoor court. The opposing team knew it, and kept shoving the spearman team members into the radiators. Their legs and arms were bruised and burned, but the boys did not complain after their smashing victory; The lineup for the team described above were: B. Pirtle; Paul Maulsby; Guy Fuller; Buren Reynolds; "Hi" Maulsby; C.B. Reeves; Clyde Hazlewood; B. Bumpus.

### Track

Spearman made a good showing for district honors. Pirtle Fuller, Maulsby, Hazlewood, and Reynolds went to Canyon for District meet. Reynolds got the highest individual score, and took honors in the events of the pole vault, high jump, discus throwing and shot put. Later he made the trip to the State Meet, where he placed for state honors in the the pole vault.

19-22-1923 School term started with more teachers, Flora Dell Huskersan followed Miss Nellie Hart and Miss Mary Lee Nichols as English Teacher. She also taught Spanish. James H. Stark was the new Vocational Agriculture teacher. Miss Evlyne Hinyard taught Commercial Subjects., and Exol Taylor taught domestic art (or Science).

Special students this season were: Jewel Lee, Hazel Lowe, Maybele Brown, Eva Cator and Grace Balthrop. Eva Cator took part in Basketball- (the Pirtles had moved) and played in Center with Susie Pierce. At the end of the second term seven and one-half accredited units were attained in the following subjects; two in English; one in Plane Geometry; one in P Geography; one is General Agriculture, and one-half in civics.

At the end of the third year Spearman had an accredited High School, except for languages. College entrance was available. The Dean of West Texas SC (Mr. Shirley) had this writer to take Latin at WTSC again with , if

a B average was made the first semester--I made it!!

The third term came to a sorry close in the early hours of a Wednesday morning, May 23, 1923. The old school building burned in a roaring holocaust like a huge pile of tinder. No lives were lost, and hopes were in everyone's heart that a bigger and better building to fill the needs of the growing town, would soon take its place.

Remember When??

Remember how Arnold Wilbanks like to do amusing things like make Della Dacus laugh?? It was painful for her at that time for she had a boil on her nose!

Remember the boy who made all the kids hold their nose when he entered the room?? (His feet smelled bad.)

Remember the boy, Eric Dodson, a junior, who submitted the winning name of "Lynx" for the Athletic Teams, and how opposing teams yelled, "here comes the "Lenox" team. What's a Lynx?? They soon found out.

Remember how Perryton spit at the players from the balcony in their new Gymnasium?? They had an indoor court before Spearman.

Remember the pretty blond curls of Myrtle Valentine?

Remember the New Essex automobile Bryan Bumpas drove (his father's), and the paint pony of Johnny King?

Remember the dances at Eva Cator's home?

Remember the Snipe Hunt in the Davis maize field? Mrs. Cator got wind of the hunt, and foiled the foolers by taking the sack holder home with her.

Remember the nice refreshments she served afterward to all the snipe hunters (student body)?

If you can remember these when's, you are "too old for the Draft".

Romances blossomed at the new Spearman High, and time marched on. For the first Spearman students, time has not only marched---it has flown!! The End Susie Pierce Dacus