

(from the 1873 Texas Almanac)

TEXAS SCHOOLS.

HISTORICAL REVIEW.

1829. The laws of Coahuila and Texas made provision for the instruction of children in schools conducted on the Lancasterian plan. The instruction included reading, writing, arithmetic, Ackermann's catechism of arts and sciences, and the catechism of the Roman Catholic church.

1830. Another law reaffirmed the above, and provided for temporary free schools.

1836. In their Declaration of Independence the Texans complain that Mexico had failed to provide the means of instruction which had been promised the children of the colonists. Section ten of the general provisions of the Constitution of 1836 declares: "It shall be the duty of Congress, as soon as circumstances will admit, to provide by law a general system of education."

1838. President Lamar in his message to Congress, favored the erection of a bureau of education. "I would" says he, "by no means limit individual enterprise ; but it is not the diversified and ever varying systems of private instruction that are to establish the moral and political character of a people." But the public institutions, "continually pursuing the same course of discipline toward each successive generation, will make the people homogeneous and united, and by blending moral and political knowledge with classical instruction, the public mind will become so moulded to the institutions of the country, that upon all the great and leading principles of free government the nation will have but one heart and one sentiment."

1839. Congress gave fifty leagues of land for a State University, and three leagues to each county for school purposes.

1840. Congress gave all counties an additional league of school land, and extended the privilege to all counties that should be organized in the future. Under these laws nearly 3,000,000 acres have been set apart for school purposes.

1845. The Constitution, article ten, says : "The Legislature shall, as early as practicable, establish free schools throughout the State, and shall furnish means for their support by taxation of property." One-tenth of all the revenue was set apart for school purposes.

1849. Gov. Wood, in his message to the Legislature, calls attention to the subject of education thus : "The Constitution of our State enjoins upon the Legislature the duty of making suitable provision as early as practicable for the support and maintenance of free public schools."

1854. The school fund of the State amounted to \$128,668. To this was added this year \$2,000,000 of the amount received from the United States for the sale of the Santa Fe territory. Laws were made for the distribution, *pro rata*, of the interest of the school fund to the various counties, the money to be applied to the payment of the tuition of indigent

children. This principal was loaned to railroad corporations. Under this law reports were as follows:

<i>Years.</i>	<i>Number of Pupils.</i>	<i>Money Distributed.</i>	<i>Per Capita.</i>
1855.....	65,463	\$40,587	\$ 63
1856.....	73,826	101,588	1 38
1857.....	87,000	106,000	1 21
1858.....	102,772	105,815	1 03
1859.....	101,031	113,154	1 12 ^{1/2}
1860.....	104,447	104,447	1 00
1861.....	105,200	65,224	62

During the war the school fund was appropriated to other purposes, and schools generally suspended.

1866. The Constitution reaffirms the article of 1845, and sets apart every alternate section of railroad land for school purposes. In November Hon. Pryor Lea was appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction. In his message to the Legislature, Gov. Throckmorton advises that all public land be set apart for school purposes.

1867. E. M. Wheelock Superintendent of Public Instruction.

1868. The Reconstruction Convention set apart all the proceeds of the sales of public lands for school purposes, and to this sum added one-fourth of the State revenue and a poll tax of one dollar on each male citizen between twenty-one and sixty years of age. The permanent school fund amounted at this time to say \$2,000,000.

1871. On the twenty-fourth of April an act passed the Legislature to organize a system of public free schools. This law was substantially based upon a plan recommended in the TEXAS ALMANAC of that year. It made provision for no superfluous officers, committing the management of schools to the police courts of the counties. But before a Superintendent was appointed, or any effort made to carry out the provisions of that law it was superceded by another, passed November 29, 1871. We have before us the report of Col. John C. DeGress, appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction under this act. Each judicial district is constituted a school district, making thirty-five ; 1324 schools have been organized, with 1578 teachers and 73,504 pupils. The report does not state the number of colored teachers or pupils, or discriminate as to sexes.

The total number of the scholastic population to be provided for in 1872 was 227,615. Of these there were white males 71,762, white females 65,536, colored males 25,636, colored females 23,961. In the county returns 4014 children were not classified.

While the people of Texas have always favored a system of general education, they have had very little confidence in our present system as it is now managed. Immense sums of money are expended unnecessarily. At first "traveling boards" were sent all over the State to examine teachers ; the Superintendent keeps twelve clerks in his office at Austin ; \$10,000 were appropriated for printing, stationery, etc., for the office, etc., etc. One of the first duties of our Legislature will be to revise our school system, reduce unnecessary expenses, and remove abuses.

ILLITERACY AND TEACHERS.

The illiteracy in our State is appalling—70,895 white and 150,617 colored persons over ten years old who can neither read nor write ! But it is an encouraging feature that 3687 teachers have already been examined and commissioned to teach, while there are probably as many more, say in all 7000 public teachers, in Texas, to a scholastic population of 227,615.

The Constitution makes it the imperative duty of the Legislature to establish a system of free public schools for these illiterate masses, and we assume that it will be done.

TEXAS SCHOOLS A NECESSITY.

Thousands of poor children now in the State, and the children of thousands of immigrants coming every year to Texas, will depend exclusively upon free schools for their education. Nothing will tend more to encourage immigration, and in general to build up our State, than a good system of free public schools.

OPPOSITION TO FREE SCHOOLS.

Wherever free schools have been introduced the system encountered opposition. This was the case in New England, in New York, in Pennsylvania, and other States in all sections of the country.

TAX PAYERS OPPOSED.

To them it appeared unjust to tax their property to educate other people's children. The same argument holds good in reference to poor houses, jails, and court houses. Children left to grow up uneducated in the streets, are apt to become vagrants or criminals. It is cheaper, on the question of economy, to educate the ignorant than to support the vicious. The children of the poor and unfortunate must be educated. There appears to be no more equitable or practicable mode of doing this than by a system of free public schools, supported in part by taxation. When this has been fairly tried, the system has proven eminently successful and grown into popular favor. But the system in this State certainly admits of much improvement.

THE COMPULSORY FEATURE.

in the free school system is objected to by some parents. What right has the State to enter a man's house and take his child (who may be required to assist at home) and send him to school ? If this objection is seriously urged let the compulsory feature be abandoned. The cases are rare and extreme where a child should be removed from parental control. To stimulate the desire for education, after schools have become general and the means of education placed in the reach of all, a law might be enacted that no illiterate young man, coming of age, should be permitted to exercise the right of suffrage or serve on a jury. Under our Constitution we may prescribe such a qualification for voters and jurors.

TEXAS UNIVERSITY.

In 1839 the Congress of the Republic directed the President of Texas to have fifty leagues of land set apart for the University of Texas. This land was located in different counties. We will give some of the principal tracts, leaving off fractions : Cooke county, 23,000 acres ; Collin, 2000 ; Fannin, 35,000 ; Grayson, 80,000 ; Hunt, 8000 ; McLennan, 41,000 ; Shackelford 22,000 ; and some small tracts in other counties, making a total of 810,000 acres. Some, though a comparatively small portion of this land, has been sold.

In 1856 our Legislature set aside \$100,000 in United States bonds for the University, and one-tenth of the reserved railroad lands for the same purpose. The other nine-tenths, reserved sections of railroad lands, went to the common school fund.

The University fund with its accumulated interest amounted, in 1860, to nearly \$500,000. Mr. Wheelock, in his report as Superintendent of Education in 1868, says that during the war \$379,168 of the University fund was expended for other purposes, leaving the Treasury but \$134,172 in State warrants.

There was at one time before the Legislature a proposition to establish two State Universities, one west and the other east of the Trinity river. We hope this will never be revived. The facilities for traveling are so great that one will answer all necessary purposes. Let there be : 1. One high grade school ; do not compel the professors to teach elementary branches at all. Admit only scholars pursuing advanced studies and seeking high mental culture. 2. Let it have complete furniture, library, apparatus, etc. 3. A rich pecuniary endowment. 4. Be plentifully supplied with brains—brains in men of high mental and moral culture.

One good, well endowed, well patronized University of Texas, will unify our great State and give a homogeneity to our population. We need be in no hurry, however, about locating it. It may yet be found advisable to put it on some of our University lands.

If Texas should be divided, the youth of all the States formed from our present territory should have equal privileges in our University.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

The United States Congress gives to each State a donation in lands for the establishment of State Agricultural Colleges. Texas received 180,000 acres in land scrip. This was sold for \$156,000. In 1871 a tract of land near Bryan was selected for the location of this institution and a contract entered into for the erection of suitable buildings.

No Normal School has ever been organized in Texas.

LITERARY INSTITUTIONS.

We have been unable to obtain a complete list of our literary institutions.

The Roman Catholics have schools for both sexes in most of the larger cities, as in Galveston, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, Victoria, Corpus Christi, Brownsville, etc.

The Baptists have Baylor University, at Independence, Rev. Wm. Carey Crane, D.D., President ; good rock buildings for both male and female departments. Waco University, at Waco, Rev. Rufus E. Burleson, D.D., President ; good buildings ; this institution is for males and females.

The Cumberland Presbyterians have the Trinity University, at Tehuacana, Limestone county, Rev. W. E. Beeson, D.D., President ; rock buildings.

The Lutherans have Colorado College, at Columbus.

The Methodists control Soule University, at Chappell Hill, only the preparatory department in operation, R. E. Chaitzburg, Principal ; three-story rock building.

Marvin College, Waxahachie, male and female, Rev. John M. Pugh, Principal ; rock buildings.

Male and Female Institute, Sherman, Rev. J. C. Park, Principal.

Male and Female Institute, Corpus Christi.

Owensville High School, male and female, Rev. H. M. Glass, Principal ; ample buildings, cost \$10,000.

Chappell Hill Female College, Rev. E. D. Pitts, Principal ; new building.

Andrew Female College, Huntsville, Dr. Samuel D. Saunders, Principal ; good building (brick).

Paine Female College, Goliad, Rev. C.M. Rogers, Principal ; rock building.

Waco Female College, Rev. W. G. Cannon, D. D., Principal ; good building.

Female Seminary, Galveston, with a commodious building.

The Presbyterians have a good college building at Huntsville, Austin College, Rev. S. M. Lockett, A.M., Principal.

The Masons have an Institute at Rusk, male and female, John Joss, A.M., Principal.

The Odd Fellows have a University at Bryan.

PRIVATE AND CORPORATION SCHOOLS.

Austin city—Texas Military Institute, Col. John G. James, Superintendent; new buildings. Female Collegiate Institute, Rev. B. J. Smith, Principal.

Alta Vista Institute, female, Mrs. H.M. Kirby, Principal, near Hempstead, Austin county.

Bayland Orphans' Home, Col. H. F. Gillette, Principal, Bayland, Harris county, Texas ; now occupied by both sexes ; is sustained by contributions from the public.

Concrete College, DeWitt county, male and female, Rev. J.V.E. Covey, Principal.

Coronal Institute, San Marcos, Hays county, for males and females, Rev. R.N. Belville, Principal.

Gonzales College.

Salado College, Bell county, has five teachers and two hundred and fifty pupils.

Port Sullivan College, N. J. Edgerly, Principal.

Seguin has concrete buildings for a male and also for a female college, costing originally \$10,000 ; Dr. M. B. Franklin is Principal of the female college.

At Navasota the Atchison Institute, male and female, has recently gone into operation.

At Waverly there are good buildings for male and female schools.

We are upon the eve of an era of wonderful educational progress in Texas. The time is not distant when we shall have our Agricultural College, our State Normal School, and our University, in successful operation, and when every considerable village will boast

its High Schools for the education of the youth of both sexes, and when every neighborhood will have its school house and a public school at which its youth can receive a good elementary education.

H. S. T.

[It should be borne in mind that private schools still exist in most neighborhoods all over the State, and especially in our towns, though in some cases they have been superceded by the recently established public schools. These public schools have, however, objectionable features, rendering them unpopular with many of our people.]

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