

## **Weldon G. Cannon History Files**

### **19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY EDUCATION IN EULESS**

**In this folder donated to the City of Euless, labeled 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY EDUCATION IN EULESS, are a few key documents and other materials from files donated to The University of Texas at Arlington for the Weldon G. Cannon Euless Collection in the Special Collections of the University Library. Following is a brief summary of materials in 1 folder under this subject that were donated to UTA:**

#### **1. 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY EDUCATION IN EULESS**

##### *Folder Contents*

Work file of varied materials for application, including narrative, for Texas Historical Marker for 19<sup>th</sup> century schools in Euless and the area; application was approved by the Texas Historical Commission for a marker, but funding failed; it would have been placed on East Euless Blvd. at the site of an early Euless school, now the site of a Sikh Gurdwara; 1/2".

[Also see another folder, EULESS SCHOOL]

There is **NO INSCRIPTION** for this marker. Although THC approved the application, no inscription was written because funding for it failed.

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## **Nineteenth-Century Education in Euless**

*Weldon G. Cannon, Ph.D.*

### **CONTEXT**

Euless, Texas, is located in the heart of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex at the south entrance to Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. In the middle and late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Euless' inhabitants were predominately English-speaking farm families scattered sparsely across the countryside. Despite their modest lifestyle and meager resources, these pioneers had a high regard for their children's education, although even with their best efforts school terms were sporadic and short. In all, they established about 10 small schools – mostly operating in crude one-room buildings or borrowed facilities and each serving a cluster of families in 21 square miles. This loose confederation of families eventually constituted the Euless School District. Euless residents for more than a century also had the foresight to consolidate resources and schools for the betterment of their children. Their early dedication to education benefited the neighboring communities well into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, through hard work and sacrifices, early Euless settlers were able to see vast improvements in education. Several notable and respected educators either taught or studied in these pioneer schools and even contributed to the development of institutions of higher learning in the state.<sup>1</sup>

### **OVERVIEW**

For 60 years, the region that became the Euless Common School District in 1913 (incorporated as the Euless Independent School District in 1925) encompassed a series of small schools served by many teachers of varying abilities and backgrounds. The first school in the area is recorded in "Texas Scholastics, 1854-1855," a state census of school children. It lists 64 students from 28 families in District No. 13, not named. Most families, however, are identified as residents of the present Euless area. The school is most likely Bear Creek, located near the Dallas County line, now within the Euless City limits and on DFW Airport property. Bear Creek Baptist church was organized in 1853 and in 1860 land was deeded to it for "school and church purposes." Three of the nine charter members of the church had children in the school and 19 of the 28 families had surnames the same as original property owners with land grants in western Tarrant and eastern Dallas Counties. There is also record of a school at Bear Creek in the 1860s that lasted at least until 1869.<sup>2</sup>

Two one-term schools, not named, have been identified in the center of what is now Euless, near the intersection of present Euless Boulevard and Euless Main Street. One operated in 1874-1875, the other in 1876-1877 in a one-room building, 20 by 30 square feet, and conducted by what was

described as an incompetent teacher. In 1876 Texas adopted a new constitution under which public education was a voluntary community effort. There were no districts with defined boundaries, taxing authority or permanent school board. Interested citizens each year could voluntarily plan a community school, hire a teacher and secure a place for classes. The state gave a small amount of money to schools for each student enrolled. Nevertheless, after 1877, educational opportunities in Euless improved dramatically when the Patrons of Husbandry, the Grangers, built a two-story Grange Hall in Euless. The upper floor was reserved for the fraternal order's activities, and the lower floor was available as a community center. Thereafter, it was used as a school until 1894 and by Methodist and Cumberland Presbyterian churches as a place of worship.<sup>3</sup>

The Grange Hall was also possibly the setting for a Palmyra Institute. B. B Paddock in his History and Biographical Record of North and West Texas in 1906, wrote that John J. Goodfellow (1856-1944), Tarrant County Surveyor after 1880 and Fort Worth City Engineer, completed "a surveying and engineering course at Palmyra Institute" but did not locate the school. However, according to Frank Johnson in his 1914 A History of Texas and Texans, Goodfellow attained his early education in "private schools in Texas and Tarrant County, and later took a special course in mathematics in the Palmyra Institute at Euless, under Professor Milton Carter." According to One League to Each Wind, a 1973 account of early surveying in Texas, Goodfellow obtained his early education in Tarrant County and "took courses in mathematics in the Palmyra Institute at Euless." Nowhere else is a Palmyra Institute identified at Euless. However, Palmyra Institutes, special courses of study mainly for farmers and their families, were conducted in many parts of the nation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially in Grange Halls.<sup>4</sup>

In 1884, Texas voters amended the state constitution to create a better, more efficient school system. Accordingly, in 1885 the Tarrant County Commissioners' court divided the county into districts with defined boundaries, taxing authority and elected boards of trustees. Among the newly formed districts was the Goodfellow School in eastern Tarrant County at the Dallas County line. It was probably on or near the homestead of Moses Goodfellow (1820-1897), John J. Goodfellow's father, who settled in Tarrant County in 1860. Goodfellow School consolidated with Minters Chapel in 1894. Today the site is in the City of Euless and within DFW Airport property, but outside the bounds of the Euless School District as it was constituted in 1913. The Goodfellows were members of the nearby Bear Creek Baptist Church. However, no connection has been established between Palmyra Institute and Bear Creek School or Goodfellow School.<sup>5</sup>

Commissioners also established a school district at Euless in 1885. The district was officially named Woodlawn, an earlier name for the community, but school was still held in the Grange Hall. By

1894, however, trustees realized that the school, by then renamed Euless, should have its own building. Voters approved a bond issue. Nearby property was purchased, and a new one-room classroom building was built. Enrollment at the new school peaked at about 100 students, necessitating addition of another schoolroom and a second teacher. Sometimes overflow enrollment attended classes in the nearby Grange Hall or Methodist Church.<sup>6</sup>

The pioneer Euless schools, despite difficult circumstances and shaky funding, nurtured some outstanding teachers and students. Dr. John W. Calhoun (1871-1947), *ad interim* president of the University of Texas at Austin 1937-1939, began his teaching career in Texas at the Euless School built in 1894. On retiring in 1939 he wrote an autobiography. In it, he described his first teaching experience at Euless and how it deeply impressed him as a young teacher and administrator. Calhoun was invited to move from Tennessee to Euless in 1897 to teach. In his memoirs, he recalled, "I taught six months at Euless, beginning in November 1897. I had 40 students ranging in age from 6 to 19 and grade from primer to algebra and plane geometry. I swept the house, made the fires, kept the school building and its equipment in order, kept the students in such order as I could and did my best to teach them something." His workdays were typical of teachers in one-room schools. In his autobiography he also wrote "I suppose I gave general satisfaction, for when trustees were elected in the Spring of 1898, the voters took pains to pledge the new trustees to employ me for the next term." Thus, he taught in Euless another year before moving on to other teaching positions in Tarrant County, graduation from the University of Texas at Austin, and eventually serving as president of the university.<sup>7</sup>

Besides Calhoun, other exceptional teachers, including Cumberland Presbyterian ministers, taught there. Another notable teacher at the school was J. Alfred Whitener (1879-1958), Calhoun's distant cousin. Growing up in Euless and attending school in the Grange Hall, Whitener later became principal or superintendent in several Tarrant County districts. In 1904, the Euless School published a small school register with a photo of Whitener, a handsome young teacher, and a list of 101 students. Probably the best known student from the Woodlawn School when it was in the Grange Hall was Lee M. Hammond (1869-1962) who became an influential figure in education in Tarrant County. He was co-founder in 1895 of Arlington College which evolved into the University of Texas at Arlington, served many years as a school principal in Fort Worth and for 6 years was Tarrant County School superintendent.<sup>8</sup>

Time and circumstances eventually forced Euless residents to reorganize the way they educated their children. Consolidation of resources and talents strengthened what had been a scattered, unfocused educational system. In 1904, the Rock Island Railway Company built a line from Fort Worth to Dallas, passing about one and one-half miles south of Euless. There, the railway established a town

named Tarrant. The new railroad town grew rapidly. So students could attend classes near home, Euless trustees established a school in Tarrant. Also, adjoining Euless was the Evatt School District. The one-room Evatt School, commonly called Crossroads School, was one mile west of the Euless School. It was earlier known as the Glassco (Glasscow) School that had been in operation since about 1877, located in the present City of Bedford. When the Glassco building burned in 1899, a new building was built one-half mile south on property donated by the William H. Evatt family. By 1913, patrons of the Euless, Tarrant and Evatt schools realized that one school would better serve their educational needs. Hence, on petition of voters of the two districts, the Tarrant County Commissioners Court in 1913 consolidated them into a new district named Euless. Voters approved a bond issue, and a splendid new building, erected in a central location, was occupied in 1914. The two-story, seven-room brick structure was one of the largest construction projects in Northeast Tarrant County at the time. Parts of the building were used as a school until 1970 and today the property is site of the South Euless Elementary School.<sup>9</sup>

Merger of the Euless and Evatt districts also added another school to the mix. Besides Crossroads, the Evatt district maintained a school for black students in the nearby Mosier Valley community. At that time the Texas Constitution and state laws mandated separate schools, identified as “white” and “colored,” for students of different races. Euless school trustees operated the Mosier Valley School until 1949 when they closed it, bussing elementary school students to Fort Worth along with high school students who had long gone to school there. In 1950, a federal court determined that Euless must maintain a “separate but equal” school for black students in the district. After considerable controversy, including an unsuccessful attempt in 1950 of black students to enroll in the white school, the Euless district erected a new building, and the Mosier Valley School reopened in 1953. The Euless district, and its successor, Hurst-Euless-Bedford, operated the school until 1968 when it closed for good and students were integrated into neighboring schools.<sup>10</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Nineteenth-century education in Euless was sporadic, consisting of a few months of formal lessons in borrowed one-room facilities, often taught by one poorly prepared instructor, but sometimes directed by well-prepared, competent, talented teachers. Although educational opportunities in the middle and late 19<sup>th</sup> century were grossly inadequate by contemporary standards, the citizenry made the best of their resources. The small, rural, relatively poor schools in Euless provided a basic, adequate education for students with the resources available. School patrons set educational goals and guidelines, debated and finally adopted reforms, all benefiting their school children. They kept alive the hope for something better in education and laid the foundation for an excellent school system. They were willing

to forgo their own local interests in consolidating with neighboring schools and cooperating with neighboring communities. In time they also welcomed a diversity of peoples and cultures in the schools and life of the area.

Thus, upon foundations laid between 1854 and 1914, the Euless district and the neighboring Hurst district merged in 1955, joined by Bedford in 1958, creating one of the premier school systems in Texas. The Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District with 22,000 students now serves the greater community. Euless is also the home of Trinity High School, a state powerhouse in academics and athletics. The foundation for the Euless educational system was laid by the early pioneers who understood innately that the community's future rested in the educational opportunities of its children. Euless evolved from a sparsely populated 19<sup>th</sup>-century rural settlement of mainly English-speaking farmers to a multi-cultural incorporated city where many languages are spoken. The influx of people of diverse cultures from throughout the world has given this growing city of 53,000 an international vibe. Education is still a key element in community life, regardless of ethnic origin of the citizenry.<sup>11</sup>

The marker will be placed on property of Gurdwara Sikh Sangat, which was also the site of the 1894-1914 Euless school where Dr. Calhoun taught. The Gurdwara Sikh was established in Euless in 2000. Sikh, in English, means disciple or student, and Sikhs place great emphasis upon education. Hence, the site for the marker significantly links early Euless history with the present.<sup>12</sup>

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## DOCUMENTATION

<sup>1</sup> George M. Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford: Heart of the Metroplex, An Illustrated History (Austin: Eakin Press, 1995), pp. 3-17, 89; Janet L. Schmelzer, Where the West Begins: Fort Worth and Tarrant County (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1984), p. 36; Glenn M. Holden, A Partial History of Education in Tarrant County, M.A. Thesis, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 1931, Table of Contents, pp. 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> Today, about half of the area that comprised the 1913 school district is in the City of Euless and half in the cities of Fort Worth and Arlington. However, within the City of Euless today are large areas of the former Minter's Chapel and Pleasant Glade School Districts and parts of the Bedford, Hurst and Arwine School Districts, although none of the actual school building sites of those districts is within the City of Euless. This manuscript considers only schools that were within the bounds of the 1913-1955 Euless School District, with the exception of the Goodfellow School. Gifford White, Texas Scholastics, 1854-1855: A State Census of School Children (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Book, Inc., 1991) pp. 360-361; Minutes, Tarrant County Commissioners' Court, MSS, vol. 5, pp. 325, vol. 7, pp. 234, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Charles H. Young, ed., Grapevine Area History ([Grapevine, Texas:] Grapevine Historical Society, 1979), pp. 30-31, 41; Holden, A Partial History of Education in Tarrant County, p. 34; "Alexander Dobkins Cemetery," "Bear Creek Cemetery," Official Texas Historical Marker Applications, Library, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.

<sup>3</sup> Holden, A Partial History of Education in Tarrant County, pp. 35-36; Frederick Eby, The Development of Education in Texas (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1925), pp. 171-172, 177-178; Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, p. 16; Ron Tyler, ed., The New Handbook of Texas (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1996), vol. 3, p. 279; "Elisha Adam Euless," "First United Methodist Church of Euless," Official Texas Historical Marker Applications, Library, Texas Historical Commission, Austin Texas.

<sup>4</sup> B. B. Paddock, History and Biographical Record of North and West Texas, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1906), vol. II, pp. 66-67; Frank W. Johnson, A History of Texas and Texans (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1914) vol. III, pp. 1094-1095; Sue Watkins, ed., One League to Each Wind: Accounts of Early Surveyors In Texas (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1973), p. 330; Augusta Chronicle (Augusta, GA), December 12, 1873, p. 2, January 15, 1906, p. 4, September 22, 1907, p. 17; Sterling Standard (Sterling, IL), November 10, 1887, p. 4, January 25, 1888, p. 4; Lebanon Courier and Semi-Weekly Report (Lebanon, PA), January 23, 1907, p. 3; Daily Telegram (Adrian, MI), February 12, 1920, p. 7, February 24, 1921, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Eby, The Development of Education in Texas, pp. 194-195; Minutes, Tarrant County Commissioners' Court, vol. 4, pp. 239-241, vol. 22, p. 4; Paddock, History and Biographical Record, vol. II, pp. 66-67; Johnson, A History of Texas and Texans, vol. III, pp. 1094-1095; Watkins, One League to Each Wind, p. 330; Deeds, Tarrant County, MSS, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas, vol. K, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes, Tarrant County Commissioners' Court, vol. 4, pp. 239-241, vol. 22, p. 4; Deeds, Tarrant County, vol. 475 pp. 125-129; Holden, A Partial History of Education in Tarrant County, p. 7; "First United Methodist Church of Euless," Official Texas Historical Marker Application; "Euless School Register, 1904," MS, Museum, Heritage Park, Euless, Texas; The Arlington Journal, November 28, 1902, p. 5; Interview, Monnie Cannon Borah, by Weldon G. Cannon, October 29, 1983, Euless, Texas,

in possession of the author; Interview, Jessie Ferris Cannon, July 8, 1975, Euless, Texas, by Weldon G. Cannon, in possession of the author.

<sup>7</sup> John W. Calhoun, "Some Notes of an Autobiographical Nature Connected with the Very Prosaic Career of One J. W. Calhoun, School Teacher," 1939, MS, Museum, Heritage Park, Euless, Texas; "John W. Calhoun," Vertical Files, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; E.C. Barker, chairman, et al., University of Texas at Austin faculty profiles, "In Memoriam John W. Calhoun," (<http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2000-2001/memorials/SCANNED/calhoun.pdf>), accessed May 11, 2015; The Heritage of Coffee County, Tennessee, 1836-2004 (Waynesville, North Carolina: The Coffee Co. Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc., 2005), pp. 149, 234, 320.

<sup>8</sup> Holden, A Partial History of Education in Tarrant County, pp. 9-10, 36; Schmelzer, Where the West Begins, p. 64; "Euless School Register, 1904;" "Lee Morgan Hammond," biographical vertical files, Fort Worth Public Library, Fort Worth, Texas; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Evening Ed., February 11, 1962, sec. 2, p. 2, May 10, 1958, sec. 1, p. 2; The Fort Worth Press, February 11, 1962, p. 20A; Interview, Sarah Elizabeth "Betty" Fuller Jernigan by Weldon G. Cannon, November 2, 1969, Petersburg, Texas, in possession of the author; Interview, Ida Jernigan Crawford by Weldon G. Cannon, November 2, 1969, Petersburg, Texas, in possession of the author; The Denman Collection, Special Collections, Library, the University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas.

<sup>9</sup> Holden, A Partial History of Education in Tarrant County, pp. 35, 40; Green, Hurst, Euless, Bedford, p. 19; Minutes, Tarrant County Commissioners' Court, vol. 23, pp. 258-260; The Arlington Journal, April 30, 1915, p. 1; "Site of Glassco School," Official Texas Historical Commission Marker Application, Library, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas; Weldon Cannon and Sarita Ellis, Celebrating 80 Years of Education: Euless School and South Euless Elementary School (Euless, Texas: South Euless Elementary Parent-Teacher Association, 1993), pp. 1-2; Weldon G. Cannon, "Tarrant: A City That Might Have Been," City of Euless "Our History, Our Past," (<https://www.eulesstx.gov/history/narratives/Tarrant%20A%20City%20that%20might%20have%20been.pdf>), accessed May 11, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Green, Hurst, Euless, Bedford, pp. 66-67; "Mosier Valley School," Official Texas Historical Marker Application, Library, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas; Tarrant County Commissioners' Court Minutes, vol. 19, p. 135; The New York Times, September 6, 1950, p. 34; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Morning Ed., June 20, 1950; The Dallas Morning News, September 6, 1950, sec. 1, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> HEB Schools, 1958-1983, A Tradition of Excellence: Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District Annual Report 1983, (Bedford, Texas: Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District, 1983); City of Euless, Texas, History, "Euless: Our History, Our Past" (<https://www.eulesstx.gov/history>), accessed May 11, 2015; Hurst Euless Bedford Independent School District, "About HEB," (<http://www.hebid.edu/insideheb/aboutheb.asp>), accessed May 11, 2015; Green, Hurst, Euless, Bedford, p. 69.

<sup>12</sup> Tarrant County Tax Appraisal Real Estate, "Gurdwara Sikh Sangat Inc.," 1400 West Euless Boulevard, Euless, Texas 76040, (<http://www.tad.org/property-data-sheet-commercial?keyword=03849279>), accessed May 11, 2015; Tarrant County Tax Appraisal Real Estate, "Gurdwara Sikh Sangat Inc.," 200 East Euless Boulevard, Euless, Texas 76040, (<http://www.tad.org/property-data-sheet-commercial?keyword=00017809>), accessed May 11, 2015;

Tarrant County Tax Appraisal Real Estate, "Gurdwara Sikh Sangat Inc.," 100 Cullum Drive, Euless, Texas 76040, (<http://www.tad.org/property-data-sheet-commercial?keyword=00017795>), accessed May 11, 2015; Tarrant County Tax Appraisal Real Estate, "Gurdwara Sikh Sangat Inc.," 104 Cullum Drive, Euless, Texas 76040, (<http://www.tad.org/property-data-sheet-commercial?keyword=00017787>), accessed May 11, 2015; "Report of a Meeting with the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat, Euless, Texas, April 10, 2015," Barbara Collier, Chairman, City of Euless Historical Preservation Committee, personal correspondence via email, from Barbara Collier to Weldon Cannon, May 21, 2015, in possession of the author; Personal correspondence via email, from Andy Weinzapfel to Weldon Cannon, April 10, 2015, in possession of the author; Personal correspondence via email, from Andy Weinzapfel to Weldon Cannon, May 10, 2015, in possession of the author.

## DOCUMENTATION

Families of students listed in Gifford White's TEXAS SCHOLSTICS, 1854-1855, A STATE CENSUS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN, District 13, which was probably Bear Creek School.

*Barnard, Sary	Gibson, John
*Barsons, James (Parson, Parsons)	*House, Kitty
*Bennett, M	*Hurt, J. A. (Hust)
*Burgoon, C.	*Jasper, A.
Burns, W. P.	*Jasper, Joel
*Cate, James	Johnson, J. B.
*Crowley, Isham	Knight, G. W.
*Crowley, R.	Millsap, John
*Commins, Margaret (Cummings)	*Roggers, Sary (Rogers)
Davis, S.	*Sowell, Peter
Dobkins, A.	Stterwhite, M. L. (Satterwhite)
*Doss, Jesse	*Tetter, G. (Teeter)
*Downing, A. M. (Downnen)	*Tetter, Garrett (Teeter)
Freth, F. (Fitch)	*Walker, Hiram

*\*Land Surveys in NE Tarrant and NW Dallas Counties bearing surnames of these families as they are spelled in the White book. In parentheses are variations of the spellings of names as indicated in some land records.*

TEXAS SCHOLASTICS 1854-155, DISTRICT # 13 (BEAR CREEK) FAMILIES

\*Land Surveys in NE Tarrant and NW Dallas Counties bearing surnames of families

\*Barnard, Sary  
\*Barsons, James (Parson, Parsons)  
\*Bennett, M  
\*Burgoon, C.  
Burns, W. P.  
\*Cate, James  
\*Crowley, Isham  
\*Crowley, R.  
\*Commins, Margaret (Cummings)  
Davis, S.  
Dobkins, A.  
\*Doss, Jesse  
\*Downing, A. M. (Downnen)  
Freth, F. (Fitch)  
Gibson, John  
\*House, Kitty  
\*Hurt, J. A. (Hust)  
\*Jasper, A.  
\*Jasper, Joel  
Johnson, J. B.  
Knight, G. W.  
Millsap, John  
\*Roggers, Sary (Rogers)  
\*Sowell, Peter  
Stterwhite, M. L. (Satterwhite)  
\*Tetter, G. (Teeter)  
\*Tetter, Garrett (Teeter)  
\*Walker, Hiram

# NINETEENTH CENTURY EULESS SCHOOLS LOCATIONS

(?) --Indicates approximate location

1. District No. 13 School  
(possibly Bear Creek)
2. School 1874-1875(?)
3. School 1876-1877
4. Grange Hall School  
(and possibly Palmyra Institute)
4. Woodlawn School
5. Goodfellow School(?)
6. Glasgow School
7. Evatt (Crossroads) School
8. Mosier Valley School
9. Euless School (1894-1914)
10. Tarrant School
11. Euless School (1914 ff)

