



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Travis Elementary



Elementary Schools: Alamo | Bonnie P. Hopper Primary | David Crockett | George Washington Carver | Harlem | Highlands
James Bowie | Lorenzo De Zavala | Mirabeau B. Lamar | San Jacinto | Stephen F. Austin | Ashbel Smith | Victoria Walker | William B. Travis

Junior Schools: Baytown | Cedar Bayou | Gentry | Highlands | Horace Mann

High Schools & Others: Goose Creek Memorial | Impact Early College High School at Lee College | John M. Stuart Career Center
Peter E. Hyland Center | Robert E. Lee | Ross S. Sterling | School Community Guidance Center

403 E. James Street

William Barrett Travis, the eldest of eleven children, was born August 9, 1809, to Mark and Jemima (Stallworth) Travis. At the time of his birth, the family lived on Mine Creek near the Red Bank community, which centered around the Red Bank Baptist Church in Edgefield District, near Saluda, Saluda County, South Carolina. His family moved to Sparta, Alabama where he went to school and graduated from Sparta Academy

As a young adult, Travis was apprenticed to James Dellet, the leading attorney in Claiborne. Under his tutelage, Travis became an attorney and partner, and for a brief time operated a joint office across the river at Gosport, Alabama. He married Rosanna Cato with whom he had two children (Charles Edward and Susan Isabella). He was briefly a soldier in the Alabama Militia receiving his commission in 1830.

In 1931, Travis left Alabama for Texas. He setup law offices in Anahuac. In 1931 relationships between the Mexicans and the American immigrants to Texas began to turn volatile. Travis was arrested and jailed for protesting the actions of John Davis Bradburn, the Mexican Army officer assigned to enforce the new immigration laws. Following the incident, Travis would move his law offices to San Felipe.

Travis would become involved and play a pivotal role in the dramatic events in the Texas Revolution. His role as Commander at the Battle of the Alamo would elevate him from a mere Texan to that of a Texas legend and hero. Travis valiantly led 183 Texians against the overwhelming and significantly larger Mexican Army. According to historical accounts,

"Travis's letter addressed "To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World," written on February 24, two days after Santa Anna's advance arrived in San Antonio, brought more than enough help to Texas from the United States, but it did not arrive in time. When Santa Anna had his forces ready, he ordered an assault on the Alamo. This occurred just before dawn on March 6, 1836. The Mexicans overpowered the Texans within a few hours. Travis died early in the battle from a single bullet in the head. His body and those of the other defenders were burned."

His legacy in Texas would remain and he would be immortalized statewide as numerous schools, buildings, and even the county in which Austin lies are named in his honor – including William B. Travis Elementary in Baytown, Texas in the Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District.

William B. Travis Elementary School opened its doors in the fall of 1955 to accommodate the new Lakewood Subdivision and to relieve the overcrowded David G. Burnet Elementary School in Wooster. In its inaugural year, Travis had eight employees instructing 155 students. Leon Legler was the first principal and initially had duties at both Travis and Burnet, but eventually became principal exclusively at Travis.

Additions and renovations to the original buildings became necessary throughout the years as the enrollment increased. In 1962 more classrooms were added. In addition, an auditorium and cafeteria were constructed.

In the early 1970s, Burnet Elementary was closed as a zoned-



Despite opening in 1955, Travis existed for over twenty years without an official mascot. In 1976, which was an election year, a student-wide election was held to determine the school's mascot and colors. The mascot chosen was the Tigers and the colors were appropriately orange and black.

1979 saw some major changes at Travis. Mr. Legler, the first principal, retired. Mr. Jepp Busch took over duties as principal. In addition, the chairs from the auditorium had been removed converting it into a gym-auditorium. The floor, however, kept its sloped grade down to the stage. The floor was made one level. Construction on a new gym adjacent to the fourth and fifth grade wing began. It was completed in May of 1980 and named in honor of Mr. Legler. It became officially known as Legler Gym, and was used for the upper grades. The original gym-auditorium would be used as primary grade gymnasium.

One of the more dramatic events in the history of Travis would occur in 1983. On August 18, a few weeks before school started, Hurricane Alicia devastated the Baytown area. The hardest hit area was the Brownwood subdivision. Brownwood was zoned to Travis. The majority of the homes were destroyed and subsequently the area was condemned. Many students attending Travis lost their homes. The hurricane would significantly impact the enrollment at Travis.

Mr. Busch would remain principal until his retirement in 1992. In his honor the gym-auditorium was renamed Busch Auditorium. Longtime Travis teacher Brenda Dykes took over duties as principal. In 1996 Travis would receive the prestigious Barbara Bush Literacy Award and was rated a five-star school.

As all good things must come to an end, it became evident that the aging Travis building could no longer accommodate student growth. In 1999, GCCISD residents approved a bond package which included a new Travis Elementary. The 2001 – 2002 school year was the final year in the original building. A farewell reception/reunion to the old building was held in April 2002. Former students and staff were invited to reunite and pay tribute to the original building. Travis moved into their new building the following school year.

Brenda Dykes finished her tenure as principal at Travis in 2004 when she retired. She was replaced by Brenda Hastings-Gongora who continues to serve as principal. Travis, a school with over a 50 year history, has only had four principals.

attendance school and reconfigured first as a special populations school. It eventually became an alternative school before its demolition. Students who had attended Burnet Elementary were now zoned to attend Travis Elementary.

Travis celebrated its golden anniversary in 2005. Throughout its history, Travis has been rated both "Recognized" and "Exemplary" by the Texas Education Agency for student performance. Travis now has an enrollment which exceeds 1000.

From its small and humble beginnings as a school built to relieve overcrowding to its current and prominent location in Lakewood and the West Baytown area, William B. Travis Elementary School is an important part of local history just as its namesake is in Texas history.

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