



**GRAND PRAIRIE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SITE
GRAND PRAIRIE SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK**

Site Medallion No. 20

**202 College Street (dedicated 1937) and 214 College Street (dedicated 1905)
Lot/Block/Survey: Block A-1, Lot 32, Thomas Second Survey**

MINI HISTORY OF GPISD

Early Settlement: Before 1861, no formal schooling was available for children of this area. Until school was provided, the children attended at Eagle Ford, northeast of our area. They boarded with the residents of Eagle Ford during the school term, returning to their homes each weekend to be with their families.

The “Valley Church” was the first school and the first church to be established in this section of Dallas County, and was located about ½ mile east of the Jordan Ranch (currently Bowles Home) and near the bank of the Trinity River. Rev. James Hargroves, a Baptist minister, was the teacher and the preacher of this combined school and church.

The second location of the school was on the David Jordan homestead (in the northeast part of Grand Prairie near the current NE 31st-Bowles Street-Meyers Road area). Mr. Godfrey was the teacher for this small school which was built of logs and heated by a fireplace. The students were not graded but were put into groups according to their abilities to spell. About 1875, the one-room school was located on Arkansas Lane, in the southern portion of the present community.

The citizens of Grand Prairie voted on July 5, 1902, to establish the Grand Prairie Independent School District. There were 79 votes in favor of incorporation and 60 opposing votes. Those in opposition wanted to continue as a common school district under the direction of the Dallas County School Board and that County Superintendent, J.D. Cochran.

The first school bonds were issued on June 1, 1905. The total of the bonds was \$8,000.00 at 4% interest, payable in 40 years. When this bond issue carried, the board of education let the contract for construction of a two-story brick school building at 214 West College Street. The school’s first

graduating class completed its high school work in 1911, ie, Florence Cox, Flora King, Viola King and Reuben Tolliver.

The second part of this marker is recognition of an addition to the eleven grade complex and on the southeast corner of the property, 202 West College Street. The building included a new auditorium. The first graduating class to use the new auditorium was in 1936 according to Mrs. Camilla Poindexter Patterson, a longtime resident, as reported to Ruthe Jackson during the county survey citizen meeting.

Auditorium Description and Data: Originally designed interior was a foyer, auditorium seating, stage and backstage storage area. The exterior portion has been changed to complement the addition of the west wing offices that have been added. Work began on the building in 1935 according to Buck Smith, former Business Director for GPISD. The construction of cream-tan color bricks was completed by PWA (Federal project). The cornerstone indicates that the dedication of the building was in 1937 (apparently after the first class of 1936 used it for graduation exercises). Architect: Hoke Smith.