

Baseball at East Vealmor Plant about 1954

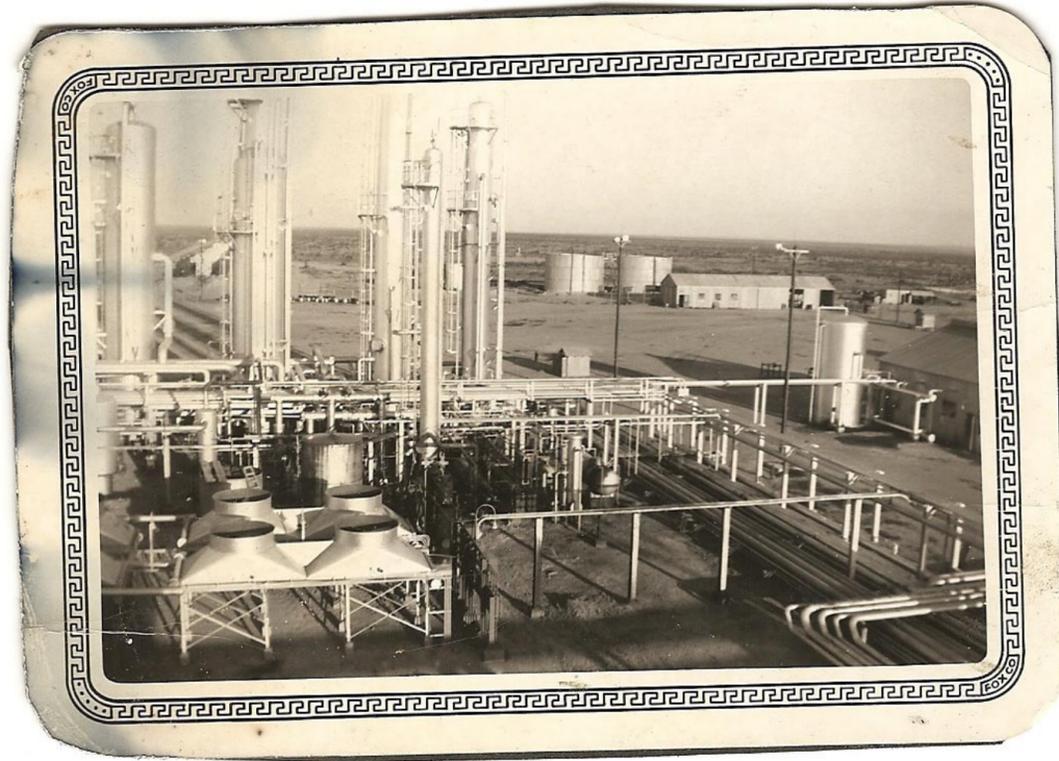
Most of the time the farm boys (Jackrabbits) won. We played until we got big enough and strong enough to keep hitting the boss', James Zikes Sr., house in right field. Our ball diamond was in what we called the "horseshoe", the center of the camp.



The Gay Hill Team

Left to right, Back Row. 1. ? 2. Jimmy McEachern 3. Leroy Martin 4. Sonny Anderson 5. Mr. Bass, Coach 5. Barry Streetman 6. Trifon Rodriquez 7. ? 8. James Buchannan
Front Row: 1. Monty Clendenin 2. Gerald Alexander 3. Mike Wilson 4. Jimmy Roy Lockhart 5. Norvin Hamlin 6. Doug Barnhart 7. Ronald Skinner

The Reef Oil LPG Plant in two photographs below. The lower is a view from the cooling tower. In the background can be seen the baren camp, consisting of fifteen houses in a "horseshoe" configuration.



First Picture: Three houses with very high T.V. antennae. The swing set in the center of the "horseshoe" also had our basketball goal. Second Picture: R.A. Clendenin and Leslie Lloyd in control room of plant.

If Pa Clen had explained that the LPG technology was kin to a still, I would have understood it a little better. Natural gas under pressure and at various degrees of temp would produce: Butane, Propane, Pentane, Naptha, Drip Gasoline, and maybe even Black Label Jack. The "towers" were where the natural gas was separated into its many by-products.

There's a passage in Deuteronomy that says "Do not muzzle the ox that treads the corn". Most of the plant workers interpreted this to mean that "If we make the gas, we can burn it." My dad put three boys through college on "Drip Gasoline" My older brother, attending Texas Tech, had an additional gas tank mounted in the trunk of his '55 Ford. It was a rolling powder keg. Drip gas was so volatile that we had to put electric fuel pumps on our cars to keep the gas line under enough pressure and keep it from vaporizing in the line. It made for some fast drag cars. The car I learned to drive was a 1957 Ford Fairlane with a 300hp Highway Patrol Interceptor Engine. It would vapor lock and I could still out drag a friend who had a 1964 Chevy Corvette engine. Man, it was the hottest car in Howard County.

As I had thought about it over the years "the camp" was like an ancient sailing ship. We had carpenters, electricians, chemists, bosses, control room operators, machinists, foreman, welders, everything that was needed to keep the plant running.

All went well with those resident WWII and Korean Conflict vets, but as time went by and as "oil field trash" began to take the helm, a group of guys started selling drip gas--until the FBI set up a sting operation that brought "muzzling the ox" to a halt.

GAY HILL COMMON SCHOOL

The modern, well-equipped and well-financed Gay Hill Common School offers strong instruction program to its student body of 115.

A SCHOOL DEDICATED TO ITS YOUTH

School Plant

Gay Hill Common School, located 18 miles north of Big Spring in the oil field, is the center of activity for the community and considered to be one of the better rural schools in Texas. Most patrons of the school are employees of an oil company; however, many live on ranches and farms and either work for an oil company or have oil wells.

Gay Hill has grown from a 26 student, 2 teacher school in 1951 to a 115 student, 8 1/4 teacher school in 1957. The discovery of oil contributed largely to the growth; however, many employees in Big Spring live in the Gay Hill community and enjoy the unexcelled conditions existing in the Gay Hill School.

The physical plant is one of the best in West Texas, being complete with a modern cafeteria where every student eats; eight modern classrooms; and the necessary auxiliary rooms. When more classrooms were needed to accommodate the students and provide a classroom for each grade, 98% of the voters gave it their stamp of approval.

Each well-lighted classroom is provided with lockers for the students and a type desk that will hold their books, leaving the locker for warmer clothing and extra items. Teachers find this makes it much easier to keep the room neat and well arranged. All of the furniture is movable so different groupings can be provided without much confusion. Students enjoy changing the seating arrangement of their rooms. It seems to give them a new lease on education and stimulates interest.

Playground equipment has been installed on the south side of the school building so the students may receive sunshine as they enjoy their play periods. The PTA and Board of Trustees have jointly equipped the playground with 6 pieces of playground equipment designed for safety and enjoyment.

Gay Hill maintains 8 grades and homes to transfer and pay tuition in the high school students in order that they may participate in activities and a curriculum beyond what Gay Hill could offer due to the small number of high school students. The local district transports the transferring high school students to the receiving districts.

Houses are conveniently located on the campus for teachers rent and utility free. It is almost necessary to furnish housing for teachers as the nearest city is 18 miles. The administration has found that it makes it much easier to obtain teachers by having a place for them to live.

The school is very fortunate in having oil and the advantages it brings to the community. Most of the major oil companies have holdings in the district, but the company that boosts the school most by offering several students is Reef Fields Gasoline Corporation. The oil has made it possible for the district to be a balanced-budget school and operate without state aid.

Teachers receive a minimum of \$600 above the state schedule for teacher's salaries in addition to the rent and utility free apartments. The subsidized salary scale also assists in obtaining teachers of good quality, when the supply is almost exhausted. All of the teachers have their degrees and half of them have master's degrees.

Board of Trustees
The Board of Trustees is organized into 3 committees in order to expedite

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The social anchor that tied our community was Gay Hill Elementary School (Independent School District). The school owned a few oil wells which made it independent and high quality. There were six houses for teachers, rent and utility free and it made Gay Hill a very sweet place to teach little toe-headed boys and mouton-clad girls.

Gay Hill was the social center of our community. Sports, plays, halloween carnivals, the Coahoma Marching Band were among the cultural gems of the school. I still remember "flight of the bumblebees". We had a sports program (baseball, basketball track-and-field) that went to Greenwood to the Southwest, Elbow to the South, Center Point, Vealmoor, Ackerly, Coahoma and places in between. We seventh and eighth graders fogged up a lot of school bus windows on our road trips with members of the opposite sex. What an education! I remember Mouton coats being so cuddly! When we graduated from the 8th grade we had a choice. Gail High School in Borden County or Big Spring, Runnels at first and then Goliad. Most of us chose Big Spring. Gay Hill was eventually consolidated into the Big Spring Independent School District. I feel certain that the oil wells had nothing to do with that eventuality. Gay Hill fell into decay. It was eventually burned. Locals said that a group of Satanic worshipers encircled the entire property hand-to-hand and burned the school. I personally saw Satanic graffiti prior to its destruction. I rescued a set of roll down maps of the world from my 5th grade classroom and have them in my possession to this day. I often pull down the Texas map and pine away for my life in Texas.

Equipment
Modern teaching equipment has been provided by the Board of Trustees. Most of the latest equipment developed in the audio-visual education field has been made available to the teachers. Last year the teachers made a study of the uses of audio-visual equipment in their in-service training course.

Good P.T.A.
For a school with an enrollment of 115 students, the P.T.A. is very exceptional. A hundred people is considered a small gathering at a P.T.A. meeting. Many times the attendance exceeds 300. No tricks are used to get the people out to meetings—they are just interested in their school and children. The Gay Hill P.T.A. is always well represented at district meetings and with all they are allotted at state meetings. Two local P.T.A. members, Mrs. Hollis Pickett and George Archer, serve on the district executive committee.

An Enlightened Community
Doyle Fern, principal, believes an enlightened public is the best to deal with and utilizes a school bulletin originating from his office to inform the patrons of news concerning the school. He believes one reason the community supports the school so well is that they know what is going on both on the state and local level. Any information coming from professional organizations that would be of interest to patrons is summarized and placed in the school bulletin for their reading.

Several times a year questionnaires are sent from Fern's office to patrons asking for suggestions on pressing or debatable decisions to be made by the school board or himself. This gives the community a feeling of belonging and a part in the government of their school. When legislative matters are before the legislature, a bulletin is circulated to all the patrons with the text of the bill with a suggestion that the patrons write their senator and representative of their view points.

Fern said, "Gay Hill may have the best physical plants in the country, some of the most modern equipment, and adequate funds to operate—BUT, all of these assets cannot be listed as the basis for a good school at Gay Hill. The willing workers, enthusiastic leaders, loyal supporters and patrons desiring to cooperate democratically are the real assets that make Gay Hill or any other school a good school. They are worth more than all the oil in Texas in administering a school."



Mrs. L. B. Peterson is teaching the first grade to read, using teacher and pupil-made charts, stories based on pictures and living experiences to stimulate reading interest.



Gay Hill School is well-equipped with audio-visual equipment and supplies. Mrs. Doyle Fern, wife of the principal, uses the strip-film projector in teaching reading to the second grade class. A tape recorder is also used frequently in the reading classes.



Third grade students are given a "World of Adventure" through reading experiences. Miss Peggy Brester, teacher, believes the use of literary books in reading is a necessity.

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Instructional Program Makes Use Of Many Teaching Aids



Using phonics in a 4th grade class is Mrs. Mildred Buchanan above. The record corresponds with a book showing letters as the narrator makes comments about the letter and gives correct pronunciation.



Mrs. Gladys Archer has found that the 5th grade arithmetic program is greatly enriched through the use of various arithmetic teaching aids such as multiplexor wheel-locks, bead illustrations, etc.

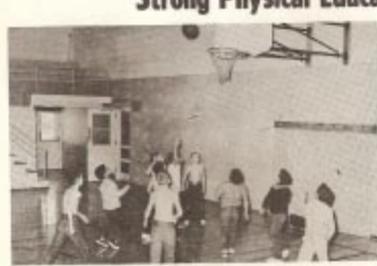


N. D. Greene uses the microscopic projector to emphasize the necessity for controlling files in a 4th grade class.



The science program in the 7th and 8th grades progresses meaningful experiences through the use of carefully made charts and illustrations, along with experiments and actual use of equipment. Teacher is George M. Archer.

Strong Physical Education Program Provided



Physical education is begun in the 4th grade and continued through the 8th grade. Above, a group of 7th grade students play basketball, a favorite sport of Gay Hill.



Playground equipment is provided for the exercise and enjoyment of all students.

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JUNE, 1958

TEXAS SCHOOL BUSINESS
THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR TEXAS SCHOOL MANAGEMENT



DOYLE FENN
PRINCIPAL OF GAY HILL COMMON SCHOOL
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Doyle Fern 8-12

Principal Doyle (D'iol) Finn