

# City's Schools Develop Modern Trend in 1899

## Health Problem Bobs Up as First to Be Solved, Records Show

WHEN the first board of the San Antonio Independent School District assembled May 17, 1899, it was confronted with problems quite similar to those which plague the current board.

Proposals for health examinations for teachers which in recent years was a bone of contention here also was a problem confronting the board in the early years after the organization of the school district.

Board members argued over whether a general medical report that the teacher was healthy or a "bacteriological" examination should be demanded.

**Health Regulations**  
Sanitary rules adopted by the first board at an early meeting reveal the progress science and invention have made since those days.

Teachers were instructed to put a pail of water on the stove to provide humidity in the classrooms when fires were kept. "Coughers" were to be separated from other pupils and receptacles provided for their needs.

Election of superintendents in the early years also created divergence of opinion. In one of the early years, a minority group refused to vote for selection of a superintendent after their candidate had been voted down. Incidentally, the man appointed refused the position so it had to be done all over again. As a counter-offensive, the minority group tried to cut the salary of the office.

Providing housing accommodations for the growing school population was an important question for the first board. One of its first appropriations was \$22,500 for building repairs on June 30, 1899. Need of a school in the vicinity of Lamm's store was called to the attention of the board. School patrons of the West End sought more adequate school facilities and the board queried the city attorney on methods for raising a building fund.

The school house on Prospect Hill needed its foundation strengthened, a four-room brick building for the First Ward was proposed and the problem of providing a school for negro children, all were questions to the fore.

**Stolen Peek**  
And disciplinary problems came in to upset the "status quo." A "Mary Doe" had peeped into her book during an examination, it was charged. She had been "failed" in the test for the alleged act. After much ado about it, the board and school authorities decided that "Mary Doe" had peeped inadvertently and that she

really hadn't profited by the stolen peek.

Deficits also bobbed up. A financial statement covering a period Dec. 31, 1899, to July 19, 1900, showed a deficit of \$723.67 in receipts over disbursements, the latter totaling \$56,913. From the State of Texas, receipt of \$5,000 is acknowledged in the report. In 1939-40, the State appropriation for San Antonio schools was \$1,172,711. In addition State and Federal funds totaling \$62,494 flowed into the school district's coffers in 1939-40.

**Tuition Income**  
Tuition which brought the district \$85.30 in 1900 added \$54,541 to the 1939-40 income. Tax funds supplied, \$51,105.59 for the period covered in the report. Another report covering the period June 1, 1899, to April 5, 1900, reveals collections of \$64,961 in current taxes, back taxes and poll taxes, the latter providing \$3,087 in revenue. Back taxes collected totaled \$11,868 and current \$48,383. "Bondsmen" furnished \$1,622 of the revenue listed.

In 1938-39, the San Antonio school district received revenues totaling \$2,618,415 for operation of the schools exclusive of payments on bonded indebtedness and note issues.

Payrolls for teachers, janitors and superintendent from Jan. 1 to April 24, 1900, totaled \$22,045. Instruction and administration today runs close to \$2,500,000 annually or about \$200,000 each calendar month.

Janitors then as now asked for wage increases and "to have a house raised." The janitor lived in the house furnished by the school district.

**Up 500 Per Cent**  
The schools census for 1901 showed 10,478 pupils, a gain of 620 pupils over the preceding year was the boast. Currently, the school census is 53,428.

Two chores on the program of that first board are no longer "musts" for the present board. A school visiting committee functioned in the early years. Board members named to the committee were required to visit the

schools in designated sections every month. Spread on the minutes of an early session is the notation: "Examination of teachers set for second Thursday in August." That was in 1899. The State now certifies teachers.

George W. Brackenridge was president of the first board. Other members included F. Groos, Dr. B. E. Haora, Louis Oge, F. A. Chappa, M. Goggan and W. W. Sloan. They elected J. E. Smith as superintendent, succeeding Schock (no initials on record), whom they later appointed principal of the "high school."

### Caldwell County's Values 26 Million

Caldwell County was organized in 1848, its 511 square miles having been taken from Gonzales County in South Central Texas. It was named for Mathew Caldwell, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Its taxable values total about \$12,000,000. The total property values in the county is placed at about \$28,000,000. The income is placed at \$10,000,000 annually. The auto registration is 6,800.

The principal cities are Lockhart, Luling and Maxwell. Of the rural population, 850 families live on their own farms. There are 1,640 farm tenants. The total value of farms and farm buildings is about \$11,000,000.

The county produces about 550,000 bushels of corn annually from 40,000 acres, 18,000 tons of hay from 14,000 acres, 44,000 bushels of sorghum grains from 3,500 acres. Cotton production usually exceeds 20,000 bales annually.



**EXPERTS EARLY**—South and Southwest Texas boys start young learning how to produce prize-winning livestock. Above is one of the boys with what he hopes will be a prize litter, and below, two youngsters are fitting their lamb for the show ring at San Antonio's spring show.

# Color Aplenty Found in San Antonio 75 Years Ago

## Street Signs Were in Three Languages, Historian Says; Houston Street a Gully

By DEE WOODS

SAN ANTONIO has ever been a cosmopolitan place. Innumerable incidents prove this; for instance, the sign of the Commerce Street bridge many years ago was printed in three languages.

"Walk your horses or you will be fined," read the sign in English, in German and in Spanish.

This bridge was built in 1842. For a quarter of a century it was the only substantial structure crossing the river within the city. Other bridges were temporary affairs. Most of them floated on barrels and were washed away with every spring freshet. Even as late as the year 1869, a flood destroyed every crossing in the city except the Commerce Street bridge, including the new foot bridge built across to Ursuline Academy.

### Center of Trade Shifts

At this time Commerce was the city's main thoroughfare and had been called Main Street. Throughout the 200 years of the city's existence commercial life has been an ever changing scene. First, trade life eddied about the plazas.

There was Constitution Plaza, later Military Plaza, with its garrison of Spanish soldiers and the Governor's Palace. Around Plaza de las Islas, now Main Plaza, centered early life in Villa de San Fernando.

Just after Texas became a state, Cabalosa Street, later called Market, was, for a time, the hub of Commerce. There was little cash changing hands at this time. Not one sale in ten was for cash. Buying was done on credit or by trade.

**Houston Street a Deep Gully**  
Next, the commercial scene shifted gradually to Commerce Street, and during the era of cattle barons Alamo Plaza was a busy section.

In early days Houston Street was neither prominent or popular as a thoroughfare.

**Both Americans and Mexicans called it Paseo Hondo or Deep Gully.** It was impassable in wet weather. The gully drained all land east of Travis Park and north of Alamo and across Houston Street south to the Maverick building and on to where the ditch entered the San Antonio River about where the Presa Street bridge is now.

As the center of trade shifted from one street to another the city grew.

**Oxcart Transportation**  
During the early 1870's wool brought 50c per pound on the streets and San Antonio was

termed wool capital of the world. The plazas were crowded with oxcarts and wagon trains. Dismal creaking made by five-foot wooden wheels of the clumsy carretas sounded like cries of distress as they rolled down Commerce Street. Oxcarts were not only used to transport wool but many commodities.

**First Ice from Maine**  
The first ice sold in San Antonio was cut from lakes in Maine and New York and sent by schooners and unloaded at Indianola. From there it was packed in sawdust and hauled the 150 miles in oxcarts. The first really successful ice-making machine in the United States was set up in the city in 1866. It was brought from France by E. G. Holden and hauled in oxcarts from Indianola.

**Cattle Barons**  
Following the wool decade came those rip roaring days when Alamo Plaza was the meeting place for trail drivers.

That was back in those days when the refrain began: "San Antonio, Antonio," and ended, "If you see her just let me know and I'll meet you in San Antonio."

There was never a wider open town. On Alamo Plaza, chili queens held court nightly. Variety theaters flourished. Wagon yards were many. Card games often ran for days. No paper money was used in gambling dens. Fortunes were won on the turn of a card. And lost. A new bunch of cowboys hit town every day, many of them arriving with a three month's thirst.

**Growth in 1878**  
In 1878 San Antonio really began to grow. During the dull part of the year from Feb. 25 to July 25 there were 199 new houses built.

Exports from the city for the 12 months ending June 1, 1878, were: Hides, 2,902,756 pounds; wool, 1,950,855 pounds; merchandise, 5,272,225 pounds; cotton, 1,495 bales; livestock, 268 cars; bones, 144 cars.

This report states: "Notwithstanding the great value of livestock within the State, one good cotton crop of, say, 80,000 bales on a good market would be

enough to buy all the cattle, mules and horses in the State."

San Antonio was becoming civilized. There was a street railway, a waterworks system, and the streets were lighted by gas.

### Military Telegraph

The city had telegraphic communication with 2,000 miles of Western Union lines in Texas at that time as well as over 1,500 miles of military lines connecting army posts located within the State.

On Tuesday, July 18, 1876, a South Texan traveling in a wagon passed through the city, and wrote in his log:

"The City of San Antonio is situated on the San Antonio River, and has a stream of water running all through it."

"It is a busy place. We had to edge our way through the streets. They were filled with all sorts of vehicles passing and re-passing each other. The streets are very narrow."

"We placed our pistols in the back of the wagon while passing through the town. It has a population of 20,000 inhabitants."

Gen. Sheridan was in charge of Union troops who took over the city after the war. The Government sent thousands of troops to Texas just in case Maximilian and the French in Mexico cast a covetous eye across the Rio Grande.

In the '70s infantry quarters in the city were housed in the Vance block on Travis Street with parade grounds between Navarro and St. Mary.

### Headquarters on Plaza

Headquarters office was moved to the French building on the southwest corner of Main Plaza. In the later '70s a building was erected for the quartermaster department of the Fifth Military District at a cost of \$100,000.

**In January, 1887, military headquarters were in the Maverick Building on the south side of Houston and the cavalry had their stables at the corner of Losoya Street.**

The late Vinson L. James in his book "Frontier and Pioneer" tells, as a boy, how sorry he felt for soldiers who broke rules and got drunk and were punished by the sergeants compelling them to drill while carrying a heavy log of wood on their shoulders.

### Valley Population Grows Steadily

The following tabulation shows the most recent population figures listed by the United States Census Bureau, together with comparative figures for preceding decades:

County	1890	1900	1920	1930	1940
City	16,065	27,158	38,952	77,580	112,227
Hydco	6,837	13,728	38,110	77,004	106,664
Wilcoy	11,461	11,151	11,068	11,498	15,559
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34,363</b>	<b>52,037</b>	<b>88,061</b>	<b>176,454</b>	<b>234,446</b>

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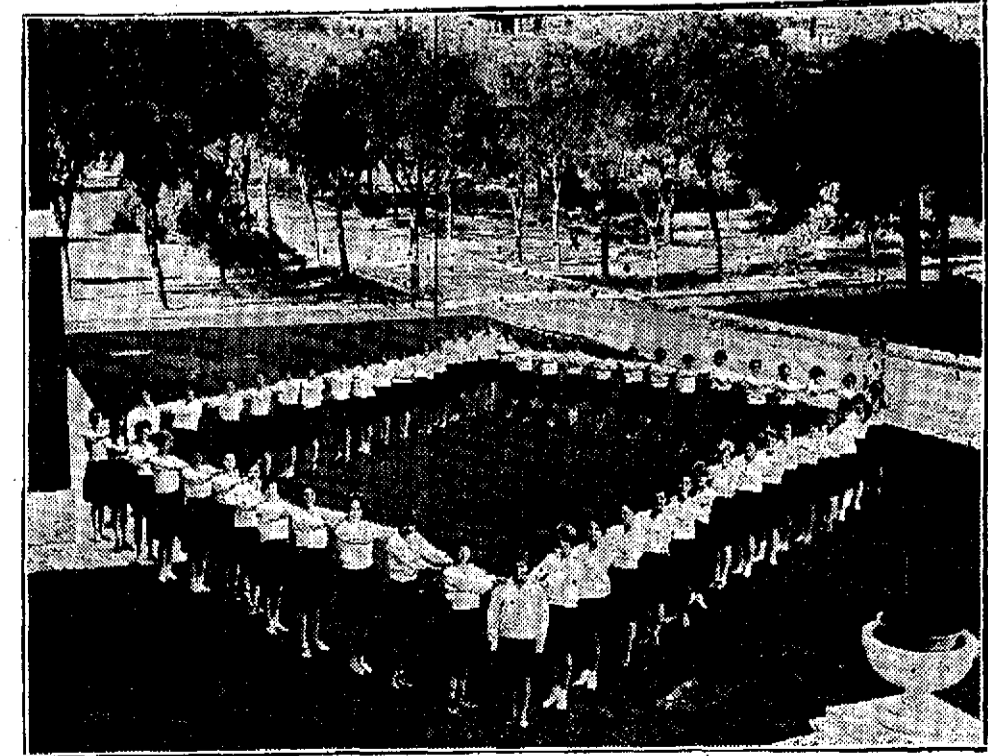
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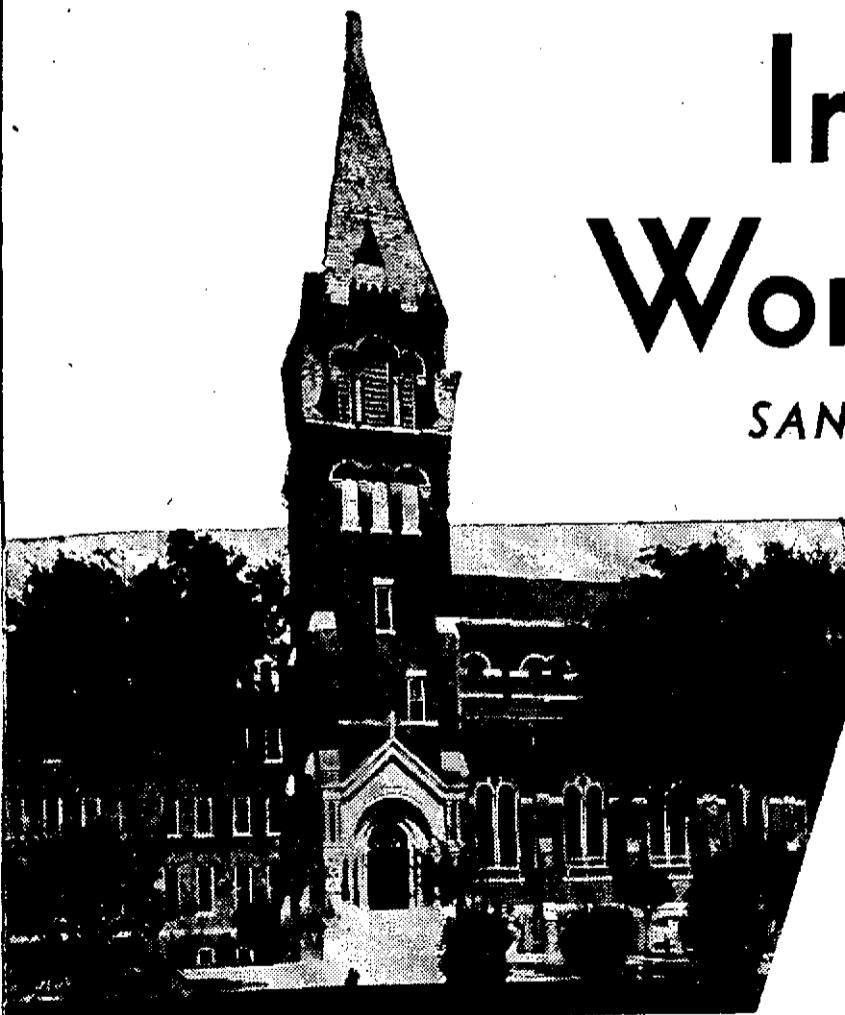
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The health of students is at all times an object of greatest solicitude. Photo shows physical educational class in outdoor activity.



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## CONGRATULATIONS

The faculty of Incarnate Word College joins other San Antonio schools in congratulating the San Antonio Express, which is this year 75 years old.

Seventy-five years of service merits the praise of all San Antonio and Southwest Texas, which the Express has so gladly served since it was established.

We wish for you continued prosperity in the achievement of journalism.