

July 13, 1997

Ms. Doris Shipman
6900 Hewitt Street
North Richland Hills, TX 76180

Dear Ms. Shipman:

We received the application for an Official Texas Historical Marker for the Smithfield School and are pleased that you are interested in marking this pioneer school.

Upon reviewing the material, we found the application form, a photograph, and an excerpt from an unidentified history of the area. The Texas Historical Commission also requires a **short documented research narrative** which traces the history of the school and its historical significance. Your nomination will also need to include a map and photograph of the proposed marker site. The enclosed photograph will be adequate if you will mark an "x" on the spot where the marker is to be placed. I have enclosed a sample narrative on the Spring Garden School which will serve as a guide in preparing your narrative.

Call me if you have questions about the enclosed material. Please return to me your completed narrative, a map, and the photograph for review and critique by the Marker Committee.

Once the Tarrant County Historical Commission approves your nomination, we will forward it to the Texas Historical Commission in Austin for their review. Upon their approval, they will request payment of the marker fee and your approval of the proposed marker inscription prior to the casting of the marker. The completed marker will be shipped to the sponsor. A dedication usually follows, with participation by the marker sponsor, any local historical organization involved with the project, and the Tarrant County Historical Commission.

We look forward to receiving the additional material and to working with you in marking this historic school!

Sincerely,

Joye K. Evetts, Marker Chairman
4400 Idledell Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76116
Phone: 817-244-1232

cc: Mr. George Hedrick, Commission Chairman

July 9, 1997

Dear Joy,

Enclosed you will find an application for a historical marker for the Smithfield School, a picture and a history of the school. If you need anything else please let me know.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,
Doris Shipman
6900 Hewitt st.
North Richland Hills, Tx
76180

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. If the marker is to be placed on the highway right-of-way, it will be shipped directly to the district highway engineer.

Name: DORIS SHIPMAN
Street address: 6900 HEWITT ST City N. RICHLAND HILL State TX Zip 76180
Phone: 817-656-4183

TYPE AND SIZE OF MARKER DESIRED (Please check one only.)

Subject Markers

This type of marker is solely educational in nature and conveys no legal restrictions to the property. Subject markers are appropriate for topics such as cemeteries, church congregations, businesses, persons, events, and institutions. These markers should not be attached to buildings. If the marker is to be attached to a surface other than the foundry-provided post, please provide the requested information in the space below.

- 16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) \$250
- 27" x 42" marker with post \$850
- 27" x 42" marker without post (see below) \$800
- 18" x 28" marker with post \$550
- 18" x 28" marker without post (see below) \$500

If not on post, to what (block of granite, gatepost, etc.) will the marker be attached? _____
Type of material? (wood, stone, etc.) _____

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Markers

Markers conveying the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation are reserved solely for historic structures deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations. The RTHL designation does carry a measure of legal protection for the structure (see Marker Policies 13 through 18) and for that reason we must have a legal description (lot and block numbers) for the property to be designated. The most commonly used marker for conveying this designation is the medallion and plate (also referred to as a building marker); however, the 18" x 28" or 27" x 42" size marker may be ordered for those who wish a greater amount of historical information to appear in the marker text. Careful attention should be paid so as not to damage historic building material if the marker is to be mounted directly onto the structure. The THC staff can provide alternate ideas for mounting upon request.

- Medallion and 16" x 12" plate with post \$400
- Medallion and 16" x 12" plate without post (see below) \$350
- 27" x 42" marker with post \$850
- 27" x 42" marker without post (see below) \$800
- 18" x 28" marker with post \$550
- 18" x 28" marker without post (see below) \$500

If not on post, to what (building, gate, etc.) will the marker be attached? _____
Type of material? (wood, stone, etc.) _____

Legal description of property (lot and block number; metes and bounds):

Before forwarding your material to the Texas Historical Commission, please check to make sure you've included the following items. Incomplete applications cannot be considered and may be returned to the applicant.

- ✓ completed application form signed by the county historical commission chair or marker committee chair
- ✓ narrative history with reference notes and bibliography
- ✓ photograph of the proposed marker location (do not use instant/Polaroid photos)
- ✓ map indicating marker location and other sites related to the marker topic
- ✓ historic photo of property and current photographs of all elevations (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ legal description of property (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ floor plans (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ site plan (RTHL markers only)

Mail completed applications to:
Local History Programs, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711-2276 512/463-5853

Additional items, including directional signs and replacement parts for 1936 markers, are available. Please contact the Local History Programs office for a separate order form.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORY OF SMITHFIELD SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY OF SMITHFIELD, TEXAS

The organization of this history centers around thematic events which occurred in the community of Smithfield, Texas. The sections are as follows: The Early Days: The Settling of Zion and the Surrounding Communities to 1866; The Founding of Zion School 1867-1876; Zion Community and Zion School Community Obtain a New Name, Smithfield 1877-1900; Smithfield Builds A New Schoolhouse and Becomes An Independent School District 1901-1919; The Arrival of "Barber Cobb," A Unifying Force of Smithfield 1920-1929; The Depression Years 1930-1939; Smithfield School Constructs Another New Building and the Community Begins a Volunteer Fire Department 1940-1955; Smithfield School Consolidates with Birdville Independent School District 1956-1972; Kindergarten: A New Era for Texas Public Schools 1973; and The Rapid Growth of A Rural Area 1974-1993.

The Early Days: The Settling of Zion
and the Surrounding Communities
To 1866

The Old World explorers were not the first men to set foot in the Tarrant County area. Some years earlier, Indians had settled in the area. After crossing the Bering Strait into Alaska, prehistoric immigrants began moving south as they followed the migration of the game they used for food, fuel, weapons, tools, clothing, and a host of other items. The Zion area was part of the Wichita Indian Confederacy.

The prehistoric rock formations of the area offered a special prize for the Indians. The earth formed flint as well as fossils. This made the area a large trading center for the Comanches, Caddo, Wichitas, Cherokees, and other nomadic tribes as they gathered to trade for the flint to make tools and weapons. One such trade area or encampment has been found near the intersection of Watauga and Smithfield Roads, where arrowheads and flint clippings have been unearthed (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

As Spanish colonization began to spread northward, it displaced southern tribes. Missions and presidios in San Antonio and El Paso were able to attract and keep some Indians with the promise of God, grain, and good living.

Others, such as the Comanche, moved north and into the Wichita country. The Wichita tribes made alliances with the Comanche tribes to fight the Apaches--who also were displaced by Spanish settlement. This movement determined the Indian population of North Texas when the frontier arrived at the Trinity River (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

The Mexican government had authority over Texas from 1821 until 1836. The Texas Declaration of Independence of March, 1836, contained this proclamation and charge against the Mexican government:

It has failed to establish any public system of education, although possessed of almost boundless resources (the public domain), and although it is an axiom in political science, that unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty, or the capacity for self government. (Centennial Handbook, 1954, p. 26)

In 1841 the Republic of Texas was in "bad straits." The treasury was empty, Indians were causing problems, and Mexico was threatening invasion. The Texas Congress decided the answer to such problems was to attract more settlers, so Congress passed the Land and Colonization Law of February 4, 1841. Under this statute, the Peters Group, headed by W. S. Peters of Louisville, Kentucky, contracted to establish the Republic's first and Texas' largest empresario colony. This company was to be known as the Peters Land Grant Colony and

contracted to settle 200 families per year for three years (Centennial Handbook, 1954).

There were a total of four contracts established between the Republic and Peters Colony. The third contract included the eastern half of Tarrant County--the area which includes Zion.

Republic of Texas surveyors and lawmakers included the Smithfield area in a sprawling Navarro County. On December 29, 1845, Texas joined the Union and became the 28th state. The Republic was now a state (World Book Encyclopedia, 1989). On December 20, 1849, Governor George T. Wood signed a bill establishing Tarrant County, recognizing that the area was settled enough to have local government (Centennial Handbook, 1954).

The Third Legislature of Texas had passed this bill creating a new county, to be named in honor of General Edward H. Tarrant, a well-known Indian fighter. The bill required an election to be held to determine the location of the county seat and required it should be in or near the geographical center of the county. Also, it should be called "Birdville" after the founder of Bird's Fort. Birdville residents claimed their town fulfilled all the requirements and had the most populated area of the county (about 30 families). The election was held on August 5, 1850, and Birdville won, thus becoming the first county

seat. Eighty acres were donated by George Akers and William Norris for public use, and courthouse construction began (Ray, 1965).

Organization of Tarrant County was completed by August 26, 1850. The record of the first tax collected showed there were 95 taxpayers and the total tax collected for the state was \$80.78. The population was 664 persons (65 slaves). With its central location and largest population, Birdville became the center of activity of the county. Court Monday brought crowds to the courthouse and to the stores. Roads began to connect Birdville to Johnson Station, Dunnville (now known as Grapevine), Zion (Smithfield), Dallas, and Fort Worth (Hallam, 1979).

The founding of Camp Worth west of Birdville (promoted to "Fort Worth" by the residents) caused that area to outgrow Birdville in population. Fort Worth began to covet the status and the commerce that went to the county seat and began a campaign to capture this prize. The leaders of Fort Worth lobbied the legislature to relocate the county seat. Under such pressure, the legislature called for a special election to be held in November of 1856 to redetermine the county seat. Both towns launched a vigorous campaign. Feelings ran high, tempers were short, and election fraud was inevitable. Early accounts show liquor played an important role in the election results (Ray, 1965).

Three votes: others say 7 or 13. Whatever the margin, Fort Worth had won. Hard and bitter feelings arose again. An expert survey reports, "They were not able to find as many male citizens in the entire county as voted that day." This added fuel to the fire in the matter of Birdville's claim that, "Fort Worth voted every man as far west as the Rio Grande." Statistics show that Birdville had much reason to doubt as there were more settlers on their side of the west and clear forks of the Trinity than west of the forks.

Colonel Albert Galatin Walker continued the fight for Birdville in a peaceful way. He was elected to the state senate from the district which included Tarrant, Dallas, and 11 other counties, and in this position fought to have the election of 1856 overturned. The third and final election on the location of the county seat as held in April of 1860. This ballot offered three options for the county seat location: Birdville, the geographical center of the county (between Birdville and Fort Worth), or Fort Worth. Many Birdville residents supported the center of the county. On April 18, 1860, the vote was Fort Worth 548, the center 330, and Birdville 4 (Ray, 1965).

The economic boom that had come with Birdville being the county seat and Court Monday began to fizzle; the throng of buggies and wagons was no more, and Birdville stores became empty. All business began to decline--the citizens

began leaving the town to move to Fort Worth, and Birdville became "a wide spot in the road." The 1860 election was final in a legal sense only. The anger in Birdville survived well into this century, and there are current residents of Smithfield who recall the personal outrage expressed by parents and grandparents (Dunkelberg & Dunkelbery, 1986). Had Birdville continued to be the county seat, the community of Zion would have progressed much more rapidly because of the shorter distance between the two than between Smithfield and Fort Worth (C. Autrey, personal communication, July 1992).

One down and one to go: Tarrant County had decided one bitter political issue in 1860, the location of the county seat. The other political issue was the presidential election in November of the same year. In the pre-Civil War era, the residents of Tarrant County were divided on the question of slavery, as was true in all parts of the United States. The division was somewhat geographical; the northeastern section (which included Zion) tended to be pro-Union and anti-slavery, while the Fort Worth area was pro-slavery and secessionistic. After the election of Abraham Lincoln, the issue reached the level of a crisis. Josiah Cook, a 39-year-old blacksmith from the area, advocated secession. He was elected as a Tarrant County delegate to the secession convention at Austin. The convention met on

January 28, 1861, and drafted an ordinance for secession to be submitted to the voters of Texas on February 23, 1861. The secession issue in Tarrant County would be described by newsmen of today as "too close to call." The margin for secession was only 28 votes out of about 800 votes polled, but the state as a whole voted overwhelmingly to join the Confederacy (Hallman, 1971).

The first company of men to leave Tarrant County to serve the Confederacy was William Quayle's company of Mounted Riflemen. The man credited with bringing the first breech-loading shotgun to Tarrant County, Alfred M. Hightower, was among the group. Hightower, a Zion resident, was a 36-year-old Scots-Irishman with an imposing figure-- six feet three inches tall and weighing 300 pounds.

Perhaps the views of the early residents of the area on the War Between the States are expressed by the attitudes of Captain Hightower's Company, Sixth Texas Calvary, Sul Ross Brigade. Captain Hightower fought for the Confederacy but was bitterly opposed to secession and, out of his company of 112 men, only three voted for secession. All served the Confederacy valiantly during the war (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

The people left at home reverted to a local and primitive economy. The women carded, spun, and wove cloth to be made into clothing. They sewed garments, cut

bandages, knitted socks and mittens for the soldiers, and also took care of their own families. The men formed beef clubs and took turns butchering club members' steers. The young people hunted wild turkey, prairie chickens, squirrels, rabbits, and collected honey from the wild bees (Ray, 1965). The supply wagon trains from Houston and Jefferson ceased to exist, and inflation was rampant. In June of 1861, what was selling for 60 cents a bushel; by September of the same year, the price had risen to \$2.50 a bushel--a five-fold increase in a three-month period. This was indeed a period of hardships and losses (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

For most of the nation the war lasted for four years, ending with the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse in April of 1865; however, the war in Texas did not end until the Confederate forces of the Trans-Mississippi surrendered at Galveston, June 2, 1865. After this date there was no legal government in Tarrant County. A provisional government was established, and, in 1866, an election was held. This new government lasted for 17 months. New Reconstruction policies ousted the elected men and replaced them with appointed officials (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

The J. W. Turner family settled in the Zion area in the 1850s. They headrighted 320 acres in the area which is now called College Hills. Turner had a blacksmith shop on his

farm. The J. W. Turner family felt a need to worship God, and, as there was no church, they opened their home for worship and began what would later be called the Zion Methodist Church (C. E. Turner, personal communication, September 1992).

Dan H. Hightower arrived in Zion in the late 1850s. He headrighted 160 acres of Zion's good, rich soil. Later, Hightower served as postmaster and offered \$.20 a trip to any boy who would ride the mail over to Birdville, 10 miles away. Eight-year-old T. E. Cloud was the only boy around with a pony of his own, so he would strap the leather satchel holding the mail onto the pony's back and make the three-hour trip (Hallman, 1971).

The William Smith family arrived in Fort Worth from Missouri in 1859 and camped for one year on the present site of Trinity Park. In 1860, they moved to Zion (Hallman, 1971).

The Founding of Zion School 1867-1875

The first reference to a formal school in the Zion area was in 1867 when the Daily Fort Worth Standard reported three schools listed in Tarrant County, Texas. The Zion School Community had 54 scholastics. Another school, Willow Springs, had 16 scholastics. The third school was Birdville School Community (Daily Fort Worth Standard, 1877).

One of the major influences upon the founding of the first school in the Zion (Smithfield) area was that some of the people who headrighted the land in Zion (Smithfield) came from states or other countries which already had established schools. Therefore, many of these people were educated and wanted their children to be educated. Many believed that the way they would continue to progress was through education (Centennial Handbook, 1954).

Leaving their own communities, however, and traveling to this remote area of Texas left them without money to send their children to the academies in the north. Many of these settlers did not have an adequate amount of money to survive or educate their children. They were farmers attempting to obtain and clear the land and to establish farms in order to make a better living for their families. They were looking for a better way of life. These people knew that there were two ways to improve their status in life--one was to work hard and one was to get an education, or to just learn to read and write and do arithmetic (Centennial Handbook, 1954).

Some of the early settlers had little or no education. Because of this they wanted their children to have a better education than they had themselves in order to improve the children's status in life. Also, if the parents were not educated, they needed their children to get enough education

to read, write, and do arithmetic in order to help with the business on the farm and at the house (M. Cantrell, personal communication, June 1992). Education was a very important issue throughout Texas (Eby, 1925), and it was the same in Zion (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

A large number of these people wanted their children educated badly enough that they were willing to sacrifice in many ways. One such way was by sending their children to school when they often needed the children at home to work on the farm (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992). They also sacrificed their money by voting a tax to support the school in 1893 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, 1893). Mothers often spent days sewing, making school clothes. Children also sacrificed by doing chores before and after school, while often not only had they attended an entire day of school but had walked to and from school (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

Another influence to begin a school in Zion (Smithfield) was the great distance they were from other settlements. Birdville was the nearest settlement to Zion (Smithfield). Even though it was only 10 miles away, it took hours, with a horse and buggy and the bad roads, to get to the Birdville area. The time in traveling prevented the two communities from having only one school (Hallman, 1979).

Eli Smith, born March 11, 1848, in Golden Grove, Missouri, was 12 years old when the family moved to Zion. His mother was Elizabeth; his brothers were David W. (1845-1920) and John (born 1849).

In 1868, when Eli was 20 years old, he married 18-year-old Sarah J. (Sallie) Hightower, the daughter of the Smith's neighbor, Alfred M. Hightower (1824-1897). Eli and Sarah (Sallie) Smith had five daughters: Sarah E. (Sadie), 1870-1905; Mary Idena, 1872-1887; Lue Effie, 1875-1876; Mellie, 1876-1941; and Ellie Alta, who died at birth. Only Sadie and Mellie lived to adulthood. Mellie married Dave Lucas from Grapevine, Texas, who died in 1910. She then married a Mr. Durham (Hallam, 1971).

The Smith brothers, Dave and Eli, owned and lived on land on either side of Zion. They were farmers, owning some of the first Shorthorn cattle in the area. In 1870, Eli and Sallie decided to give part of their cleared land to the community for a Methodist meeting place and a cemetery. These two properties adjoined. A frame church was built at this site. It was called Zion Methodist and, later, Bethel Church. This building stood until 1933 when it was razed, and a new building was built ("Old Church Building to be Razed," 1933).

In 1873, Tarrant County was ruled by martial law in order to maintain peace, supervise voter registration,

disenfranchise those parties that had aided the Confederacy, and to enfranchise blacks. In the 1873 election, the local Reconstruction officials wrote their own rules and allowed all the county men to vote if they simply pledged allegiance to the United States and registered. All the Union appointees lost in the election. Tarrant County began to see the end of the Reconstruction Era and began to see the road back to self-government (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

There are no written records available that relate to the curriculum of the Zion School in the 1800s. Therefore, it is supposed that the curriculum for the Zion scholastics was similar to the curriculum taught in other rural schools in Texas, as the common school movement was the basic pattern of public education in rural Texas (Sitton & Rowold, 1987).

The morning curriculum was usually math and reading, while the afternoons were used for doing projects. They did social studies and geography on different days, beginning in the third grade. By the seventh grade, the student was expected to be knowledgeable about the world. Practical things like sewing and cooking were learned at home. Music consisted of general singing (Dropkin & Tobier, 1976).

Many children learned to read at home by studying the Bible, seed catalogues, and farm supply and equipment

catalogues. There were no public libraries; there were only a few books at the school and church. However, all books were shared in the neighborhood. Reading was considered a skill. The people believed that the more you read, the better reader you became (H. U. Grimes, personal communication, July 1992).

There were very few supplies for the teacher or student. It was very difficult for many children to get even the basic supplies. The students only had crayons, paper, pencils, and pens (Dropkin & Tobier, 1976). For scrapbooks, they often used old magazines in which to paste their collections (L. Smelley, personal communication, August 1992). The paste was made from flour and water, as there was no money for extras such as bought paste (E. Feezel, personal communication, September 1992).

Equipment for the teachers, in the common school, was limited. Furniture was often homemade. Teaching equipment was left to the inventiveness of the teacher and pupils. Equipment normally included chalk, chalkboard erasers, alphabet and number charts for the younger students, a dictionary, a globe, library books, a world map, and pictures of Washington and Lincoln. Most of these materials were purchased with money raised by box or pie suppers (Hartford, 1977).

There was not enough individualized instruction to go around, as common schools often included students who would now be in special education classes. Some people in the past have recalled schoolmates who could not talk plainly, were hard of hearing, or could not see well. Pupils with physical handicaps were objects of curiosity (Sitton & Rowold, 1987).

Land titles in Smithfield, as in all of Tarrant County, are dependent on deeds and grants from the State of Texas. These original records, along with other priceless historical documents, were destroyed by the fire that consumed the first real courthouse of the county. This courthouse, made of stone and wood, was completed in 1866 and burned in 1876. Land title records had been copied by two title companies, and these were elevated to be the official records of the county, by act of the legislature. Many other documents were refiled, but often they were filed or recorded incorrectly. Sorting out this problem provided the Tarrant County Historical Society with an ongoing project (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

The Grand Prairie Lodge U.D. of Zion, Texas, was organized and held its first meeting July 13, 1875. It was set to work by John S. Collier, Special Deputy to the Grand Master. At that meeting, he instructed the appointed officers as to the proper manner in opening and closing the

Lodge. The second meeting was held July 17, 1875. Twelve members were present for the purpose of receiving membership petitions (History of Smithfield Lodge, 1972). It was first named the Grand Prairie Lodge U.D. (under dispensation), deriving its name from its geographical location, the Zion community having developed along the margins of the Grand Prairie and the Eastern Cross Timbers (Gage, 1983). It also is believed that the Masonic Lodge Number 455 could have been called the Great Plains Lodge U.D. rather than the Grand Prairie Lodge U.D., as the original papers were carried in a saddle bag and the only letters visible are G.P. According to Guy Meacham, a long-time Smithfield resident, the Zion area was known as the Great Plains and the people from long distances came to exchange goods at this location (C. Autrey, personal communication, May 1, 1993).

The lodge meetings were held in the Zion Church which, during those days, also served as the public school. It was located on the ground presently occupied by a day-care center in the old Smithfield Methodist Church, at Smithfield Road and Chapman Road in Smithfield about one-half mile north of the railroad tracks.

The first degree work conferred by the Lodge was the conferring of three Entered Apprentice Degrees on August 18, 1875 on D. H. Hightower, J. A. Garrett, and Eli Smith. The

first Master Masons were made October 13, 1875. They were Eli Smith and D. H. Hightower.

The time for Lodge meetings was "Saturday, on or before the first full moon in each month." According to the minutes and conversations with the older members of the Lodge, these meetings would begin in the early afternoons and continue into the night. These extra lengthy meetings were necessitated by the current mode of transportation (History of Smithfield Lodge, 1972).

Zion had two stores in the early 1870s: a general store owned by J. O. Samson, who kept predicting the world was coming to an end next week, and a hardware store run by Westly Prater (Hallam, 1979). There was a blacksmith shop belonging to Jimmy Turner. The blacksmith shop was on Turner's property near where Fort Worth Christian School is today. A member of this Turner family later gave the brick and tile for the second Smithfield Methodist Church. The building is presently a day care (C. E. Turner, personal communication, September 1992).

Zion was primarily a farming community. The residents raised grapes, berries, plums, peaches, corn, cotton, and cattle. It took a day and a half to travel from Zion to Fort Worth and back again in a wobbly, wooden-wheeled wagon pulled by two old plow horses which bumped, stuck, slid and broke in the deep ruts of the old roads. Each time the

farmers went to market, they would load their wagons with wood, eggs, hens, grapes and plums to sell on the square in Fort Worth. They would set out about noon one day and go as far as River City (Riverside now) that night, where they would sleep in or underneath the wagons. The next morning they would go the rest of the way into town. With the money they made from the produce they sold, they filled the wagon with store-bought goods to take home (H. Davis, personal communication, August 1992).

Zion Community and Zion School Community
Obtains A New Name, Smithfield 1876-1900

In 1879-1880, there is record of the Zion School Community having 38 scholastics. The Willow Springs School Community had 28 scholastics (The Daily Democrat, October 1, 1879). There is no reference to the Birdville School scholastics.

By April 8, 1876, work had begun on the first Masonic lodge building, a two-story frame structure. It was erected on a lot approximately one-fourth mile west of the present building. Much of the labor on this first building was done by member Masons. Skilled craftsmen were paid \$1.50 per day and common laborers \$1.00 per day. The two-story Masonic Lodge Building was erected for \$412.36. In the early years, the lower floor was often leased for use as a mercantile

store, while lodge meetings were conducted upstairs. At one time, it was rented to Dan Hightower, who ran a general store. Louia Brown, as a young lad, worked at the general store, then he built and operated his own drug store.

Some of the early lodge members still have landmarks bearing their names. The community of Bransford was named after T. G. Bransford, a member of the late 1880s and early 1900s. Isham Chapel, a forerunner of the nearby Hurst Methodist Church, bears the name of William Marion Isham, who also was a member in the early years ("Old House Moving, Lodge set for Sprucing," 1983).

Just about the biggest thing that happened to Smithfield was the arrival of the Cotton Belt Railroad in 1878. For weeks before the tracks reached town, all the kids and young men would run down to Big Bear Creek and watch the work train laying track. When the tracks finally reached town, the young people would walk to Bransford just to pay a dime to ride the train back home. The town of Bransford was founded by the Cotton Belt Railroad. Bransford is now just a community. It is approximately four miles from Smithfield (H. Davis, personal communication, August 1992).

The railroad fare from Smithfield to Fort Worth was \$.35, and the trip took about an hour in good weather to

cover the 18 to 19 miles. In bad weather, the same trip took three to four hours (Hallam, 1971).

There were no water wells in Zion in the early 1800s. Water for Zion had to be hauled from the Trinity River --10 to 15 miles away--or the springs in Watauga. In the 1870s, the standard wage for a laborer grubbing trees by hand from sun-up to sun-down was \$.50. A family man got \$.75 because he had more to support.

The year 1878 was a bad one for the Methodist church: the weather was severe, and there was much sickness and death. Records show Jeremiah Cloud, Burnett B. Denny, Margaret Denny, Elizabeth Gibbons, Nabois Louisa Huffman, Jefferson D. Hurst, Elizabeth Johnson, and William Turner as members of the church who died in 1878.

In the winter of 1879, when Smith was 30 years old, he became ill and died the night of January 27, 1879. Members of the Grand Prairie Masonic Lodge conducted his funeral the morning of January 29, 1879, and his fellow Masons wore mourning badges for the next 30 days. Eli was buried beside his children in the Smithfield cemetery (Hallman, 1971).

From 1876 to 1880, Glenn Holden's thesis indicates, the Zion Community District School was in the Bethel Church. The Bethel Church also had been known as Zion Methodist (Holden, 1931).

In 1881 the people of Zion wanted a United States Post Office; however, there already was one United States Post Office named Zion. Therefore, the people voted to re-name their town Smithfield, Texas, after Eli and Sallie Smith in honor of their contribution to the town of donating land for the Methodist Church and the cemetery. The church was re-named Smithfield Methodist and the cemetery was re-named Smithfield Cemetery (Hallam, 1979).

Tom Garrett kept the post office in Louia Brown's general store until John R. Crane took it over and built a post office east of Brown's store. Two of the early rural carriers were Bob Curry and Seth Turner. In 1887, the St. Louis, Arkansas, and Texas Railroad came to Texas. Twice a day, the train stopped in Smithfield to throw off a mail bag or to train and detrain passengers (Archives Files, North Richland Hills Library, 1972). The Turner family manned the Smithfield Post Office from the late 1800s until 1974, when Charlie Ed retired (C. E. Turner, personal communication, September 1992).

In 1881, the school's name also was changed from Zion School Community to Smithfield School. Smithfield School had 82 scholastics. The population for the Smithfield School was impressive, as the community system defined a scholastic as a person aged 8 through 13. The Willow Springs School Community had 15 scholastics. The county

judge renumbered these schools. Smithfield became Number 38 and Willow Springs became Number 52 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 5, 1881). In 1882, the teachers for Smithfield School were Mr. Whittenberg, Mattie Clark, and W. W. Works, who was assisted by Ona Simms and later by Mary Copage (Holden, 1931).

In 1883 when Tarrant County came to have fixed-boundary school districts, the Willow Springs Schoolhouse had ceased to exist, probably because the population had declined. The area was divided as the south line of Smithfield School District Number 26 and the north line of Florence School District Number 35 (Holden, 1931).

In the 1880s, Smithfield got its first real industry. Dave Smith, Louia Brown, and Richard Boaz pooled \$500.00 to build the Smithfield Canning Factory near the railroad. They employed 20 to 30 women and children who canned tomatoes, corn, peaches and peas which were grown by farmers around Smithfield. The cannery closed after 4 or 5 years of successful operation because the farmers began getting higher prices at the market in Fort Worth.

In 1885, a cotton gin came to Smithfield. It was hand fed and run by an old steam engine. Later another gin was added. The cotton gins were not big enough to take care of all the cotton, so they hauled it to Fort Worth or Dallas to have it ginned. J. R. Crane, Mauregurite Snider's father,

operated one of the cotton gins (Biographies, J. D. Crane, 1940).

The original Smithfield Church of Christ was a one-room frame building. The first service was October 23, 1888. Hitching posts provided facilities for transportation for the worshippers. That early-day church occupied a lot on Smithfield's Main Street which was obtained for \$5.00 ("Church news," December 17, 1960).

H. L. Graham taught at Smithfield School in 1888-1889 and was paid \$50.00 monthly for five months: November 23, December 21, January 25, February 22, and March 22. Mattie Clark also was a teacher at Smithfield School and was paid \$30.00 monthly for five months (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217). In June 1889 the northern part of Smithfield District Number 26 was taken away in creating Autrey-Edwards District Number 83 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, 1889).

In 1889-1890, there were two teachers at Smithfield Number 26. They were J. D. Currie and Nellie F. Fox. Currie received \$35.00 on September 27, 1889 and \$17.50 on October 11, 1889; Fox received \$75.00 for 5 months (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217).

There is record of only one teacher in 1890-1891, Duncan McRae, who received \$75.00 (or less) for 5 months. In 1891-1892 there was one teacher, George F. Hussey, who taught six months (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217).

The coming of the railroad to Smithfield was a blessing and a curse. It brought trade, but also the hazard of grass fires. Sparks thrown out of the side of the engine along with the coal smoke occasionally set the dry grass on fire. Usually railroad officials would pay the farmers for their losses. Smithfield had no fire wagons, so the residents came running with buckets of water and wet burlap feed sacks to fight the fires whenever they started. A major fire struck Smithfield, in 1890 (Dunkelberg & Dunkelberg, 1986).

On Monday, December 19, 1892, there was a petition signed by Dr. H. C. Gilbert and other property owners in Smithfield School District which was read before the county commissioners, praying for a local school tax election to authorize collection of a \$.20 tax per \$100.00 valuation of property. The court, being satisfied that the petition was in proper order, ordered an election for Saturday, January 28, 1893. L. B. Brown was appointed presiding officer for the tax election. As required by state law, Brown was required to make proper returns to the court within five days after the election (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, 1892).

Again in 1892-1893, there was only one teacher, George F. Hussey, who was paid four times with sums being \$100.00, \$100.00, \$100.00, and \$90.00. Hussey also had an assistant (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217).

On February 14, 1893, the returns for the Smithfield School District Number 26 school tax election held January 28, 1893, to authorize a local school tax of \$.20 on \$100.00 valuation, were canvassed by county commissioners. It was found that 29 property owners of the district had cast votes and that the measure had passed by a vote of 22 to 7. County fathers, therefore, authorized the imposition of the tax for 1893 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, February 14, 1893). "The tax was expected to raise \$122.09 for the district in the 1893-1894 school year" (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, 1893, pp. 2-3).

The teacher for 1893-1894 was George F. Hussey. He was paid six months wages in seven payments: \$54.00, \$54.00, \$60.00, \$54.00, \$60.00, \$41.75, and \$7.75. There also was an expenditure of \$122.00 to William Cameron and Company for lumber for the Smithfield School (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, 1893).

In 1894, the original Smithfield Masonic Lodge building was moved from its original location to a lot beside which the present newly-constructed building stands. The moving of this building was accomplished by the use of horses and log rollers. It required several weeks of tedious work on the part of the members (History of Smithfield Lodge, 1972).

In 1894-1895 the Smithfield teacher was J. M. Mothershead, with a salary of \$90.00, \$75.00, \$95.00, and \$87.10. There was another expenditure of \$110.00 to William Cameron and Company for lumber (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217).

Duncan McRae became the Tarrant County School Superintendent in 1896 (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/205). The number of scholastics assigned to the Smithfield School District Number 26 in Tarrant County, Texas, for the year 1896-97 was 62 boys and 47 girls, for a total of 109, which entitled the district to receive \$436.00 from the state apportionment. The number of students actually enrolled during the school year was 124; 5 students were over school age, and 10 were under school age. The school did not receive funding for students under or over the school age. Two teachers, a male and a female, taught school for six months (120 days, or a total of 240 instruction days). The teachers were paid:

	From Public Funds	From Tuitions
Male (Mr. Heltzel)	\$360.00	\$33.65
Female	178.00	43.40

The Smithfield District owned the school site and 60 double desks. The wooden schoolhouse was described as being in "good" condition. The County Superintendent, Duncan

McRae, valued the structure at \$1,200.00, with its furnishings at \$160.00 (Commissioners' Minutes Book, 1897).

Lewis William Newton was an educator and historian, who was born in Smithfield, Tarrant County, Texas, on May 2, 1881. He received his public school education at Smithfield School from 1897-1907. Newton was on the faculty of North Texas State Teachers College beginning in 1916. He also was the author of several textbooks on geography and books for supplementary reading in geography. In 1932, with Herbert P. Gambrell as collaborator, he wrote A Social and Political History of Texas (Writers' Project, 46). Texas maps bearing his name are still in use in the history department at the University of North Texas in Denton (H. Lowrance, personal information, April 1993).

Local school taxation produced \$136.29 of the finds that were spent (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/205). Records show that P. M. Heltzel taught at Smithfield District from 1896 until the spring of 1901. Mattie S. Heltzel taught at Smithfield District from 1897 until the spring of 1901. J. E. Turner was paid \$12.00 for supplies for the school on December 22, 1900 (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217).

On August 22, 1895, a petition letter was sent to Tarrant Baptist Association petitioning for a Baptist church at Smithfield, Texas. In 1895 records show that G. W. Green

was the pastor and that there were two co-pastors, Jr. R. Crane and J. W. Mirkle (History of Smithfield Baptist, 1992).

Smithfield Builds A New Schoolhouse and
Becomes An Independent School
District 1901-1919

In the early 1900s, the Woodman Lodge of Smithfield sponsored a brass band, the pride of Smithfield. The first chain-driven automobile came to town around the turn of the century and was driven by J. D. Crane and his cousin. L. A. Hightower bought Louia Brown's store, which became Hightower Brothers and included Hugh Hightower as owner. John Shaw had a blacksmith shop, and Mr. Elliott built a lumber yard. The W.O.W. Lodge rented its lower floor to J. B. Little for a store, which he later sold to Vern Lewis. Records show Vern Lewis having sold coal to Birdville School in the early 1900s.

Jeremiah Cloud was the first practicing physician in Tarrant County, according to some sources. He lived one-half mile southwest of Smithfield. When he died, he left a wife and 13 children. Dr. Boatner then practiced in Smithfield and nearby Bransford (Hallman, 1979).

Hattie Keller was hired at Smithfield School in 1901, increasing the faculty to three. Other teachers were P. M.

Heltzel and Mattie S. Heltzel. Local men were paid for supplies, painting, and taking the census. Louie Burney Brown was paid \$6.80 for supplies on February 23, 1901 while J. D. Crane was paid \$13.00 for painting on February 10, 1901. H. S. Garrett took the school census and was paid \$3.20 on August 24, 1900. The expenditures for the school year 1900-1901 were \$56.77 from local taxes and \$543.73 from state and county sources, with a total of \$606.50.

In 1901-1902 there were two teachers, H. L. Graham and Anna M. Green. Graham received \$50.00 monthly for 6 months, and Green received \$40.00 monthly for 6 months. Other expenditures were paid to: J. M. Scott, \$2.60 for taking the school census on May 31, 1902; W. C. Meacham, \$5.00 for supplies; J. R. Crane, \$28.00 for insurance on December 17, 1901; and W. W. Tutwiler, \$45.00 for supplies on November 9, 1901.

The teachers and the salaries remained the same in 1902-1903, with \$2.60 paid on June 2, 1903, to J. M. Scott for taking the school census and \$32.50 paid to W. W. Tutwiler for supplies on February 21, 1903. The total expenditures for 1902-1903 were \$575.10, of which \$145.40 was from local taxes (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217).

During the year 1903-1904, the Smithfield School District Number 26 enrolled the following pupils:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Scholastics	51	68	119
Over Age 17	4	3	7
Under Age 7	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
	55	75	130

There were two teachers, a male and a female. Together they taught school for a total of 278 days. The school term was 139 days in length. The male was paid \$350.00, and the female was paid \$315.00, while other expenditures amounted to \$32.04. Including the balance from the previous year, the district had \$456.75 to spend from state or county funds. Local taxation provided \$252.67; therefore, a total of \$709.42 was available.

The wooden Smithfield schoolhouse was described as in "fair" condition, and the 60 double desks remained. County Superintendent Milton Harvey Moore valued the building at \$1,000.00, the furniture at \$300.00, and the library and apparatus at \$12.00, with a total value of \$1,312.00. The library had 21 books (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217).

The treasurer's report lists a new schoolhouse as being built in District Number 26 in 1903 (Treasurer's Records, File Box 4-23/217). Mattie Belle Quayle Lewis reported that photographs show her father, Mr. Quayle, using his mules to hoist the bricks to the upper part of the building. The school was a two-story red brick building located at the

same location as the present Smithfield Elementary School site (M. B. Q. Lewis, personal communication, August 1992).

In 1904 and 1905 Kate and Elizabeth Gillis, who were local residents of the Smithfield community, taught at the school. Howard Davis, who is a lifetime Smithfield resident, was a nephew to Kate and Elizabeth. After leaving Smithfield, Kate and Elizabeth Gillis never married; they taught school for many years in the Fort Worth Public Schools. They always lived together and traveled in the summertime (H. Davis, personal communication, August 1992).

Records show that Elizabeth and Kate received \$90.00 monthly together. Elizabeth received vouchers number 1, 4, and 6, while Kate Gillis received vouchers 2, 3, 5, and 7. L. B. Brown was paid \$15.00 for wood on March 11, 1905, while J. W. Heffington was paid \$3.76 for taking the school census on May 29, 1905. Expenditures from local taxes totaled \$144.76 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 19, 1905).

In 1905-1906 Kate Gillis was paid \$90.00 on November 3, 1905, December 1, 1905, and two other times; she also was paid \$125.00 on three occasions. W. F. Yates received \$35.00 in December and one other time. J. W. Heffington received \$5.36 for taking the census in District Number 26 and District Number 83. J. H. Armstrong received \$22.80 for lumber on December 2, 1905, while J. W. Heffington received

\$37.75 for desks on January 22, 1906 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 20, 1906).

The total enrollment in the Smithfield School for 1905-1906 amounted to 146.

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Scholastics	62	76	138
Over Age 17	3	2	5
Under Age 7	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>
	74	82	146

The annual report shows three female teachers who taught a total of 380 school days, for which they were paid a total of \$805.00. County Superintendent George D. Ramsey placed a value of \$800.00 on the building and grounds of the Smithfield School. The furniture was valued at \$200.00, while the library and other apparatus were valued at \$20.00, with a total value of \$1,020. Costs of improvements to the schoolhouse amounted to \$57. Local taxation produced \$238.00 for the district, while the state apportionment, county funds, and any balance from the previous year provided another \$768.91. Tuitions amounted to \$78.30. The total amount available was \$1,085.21, while the district actually spent \$937.78 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 20, 1906).

County Superintendent Ramsey's report for 1906-1907 is the last one which contains data on Smithfield School District Number 26, as the area organized as an independent

district in the summer of 1907. The 1906-1907 enrollment figures are:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Scholastics	67	81	148
Over Age 17	2	2	4
Under Age 7	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
	72	86	158

The report indicates that 6 males and 8 females were doing high school work. Three female teachers taught for a total of 380 days. Ramsey rated the schoolhouse in fair condition and increased its valuation to \$850.00, furniture to \$250.00, and library and apparatus to \$25.00, for a total value of \$1,125.00. The library had 50 books. There were 60 double and 3 single desks. With 158 students and only 123 seats, there was a seating problem if all students were present.

The \$.20 local school tax produced \$169.52 in revenue for 1906-1907, and out-of-district tuition produced another \$42.05. With state and county funds and the previous balance amounting to \$924.43, the district had a total of \$1,136.00 to spend; however, the expenditures actually amounted to \$846.87 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 20, 1907). It was reported that many parents desired to send their children to Smithfield School. Cantrell Autrey worked under a supervisor at Bell Helicopter, whose family moved to Smithfield in order for their children to attend school at

Smithfield in the early 1900s (C. Autrey, personal communication, May 1993).

In 1907 there were notices posted at L. A. Hightower's store, J. B. Little's store, and at the schoolhouse of an impending election for incorporation of an independent school district on July 6, 1907. There were 47 votes for, and 28 votes against; therefore, Smithfield Common School District became Smithfield Independent School District (ISD) (Tarrant County Commissioners' Book 20, 1907).

In 1914 the Tarrant County school census showed Smithfield School to have 200 scholastic students between the ages of 7 and 17. The census was compiled by County Superintendent Lee M. Hammond (Fort Worth Record, June 30, 1914).

On October 24, 1915, the county superintendent and the state rural inspector visited Smithfield to inspect the school for a share of money which was appropriated for rural Texas schools. Schools meeting the requirements could receive amounts not to exceed \$500.00 in any one year (Fort Worth Record, October 24, 1915). In 1918-1919 the scholastic population of Smithfield ISD was 162. The property valuation was \$349,050, and the local tax rate was \$.50 per \$100.00. The expected tax revenue was \$1,745.25. The teachers were Halton Davis, Allie Meacham, and Mary Maddi Reese, all of Smithfield. The superintendent was J.

M. Trussel, also of Smithfield (Public School Directory, 1918-1919).

In 1919-1920 the scholastic population was 156 while the faculty was: L. G. Johnson, Superintendent; Miss Halton Davis; and Miss Lois Smith, all of Smithfield (Public School Directory, 1919-1920).

The Arrival of "Barber Cobb," A Unifying
Force of Smithfield 1920-1929

Clarence G. Cobb was the one Smithfield resident whom everyone in Smithfield knew. Many people in the surrounding communities of Watauga, Keller, Grapevine, Colleyville, Hurst, Bedford, and Bransford also knew him because men and boys from miles around came to get their hair cut and enjoy the true country hospitality. Many second, third, and even fourth generations had their hair cut by this outstanding man. The children always received gum after having their hair cut. On the day of his funeral in 1986, the Texas House of Representatives gave a special tribute to "Barber Cobb" (R. Bates, personal communication, September 1992).

Clarence G. Cobb, better known as "Barber Cobb," was born on February 20, 1901 in Owens Crossroads, Alabama. He lived there until he was 18. He then went to Birmingham, Alabama, where he spent the next two years learning the barber profession. On November 11, 1920, at the age of 19,

he stepped off the train when it stopped in Smithfield, Texas. He liked what he saw at Smithfield and decided to stay. Cobb then walked down the road to Main Street to the barber shop owned by D. Q. Brown and asked for a job. Brown "obliged" him, and Cobb worked there until the big fire in 1930 which destroyed most of the town of Smithfield. Cobb then bought a lot across the street from where Brown had his shop and built his own business. Cobb was the only barber in town after the fire and continued working until his death.

Cobb remembered Smithfield in the 1920s as a busy community. Originally it was located one-half mile northwest of the present site. During the 1920s there were 10 businesses, 1 school, and 3 churches. There were a drug store, a grocery store (Snider's), a post office, two cotton gins, a cannery, a bank, a clothing store, a doctor's office and, of course, the barber shop ("Memories of Clarence Gardner Cobb," 1972).

A passenger train stopped at the depot twice daily, and one could buy a ticket there to almost anywhere. One of Barber Cobb's young friends used to hop on the train when it stopped in Smithfield, to hitch a ride a few hundred yards when it passed close to his home. Normally, Cobb reported, the train would slow enough so that he could jump off, but one day, much to his surprise, the train gathered speed and

carried him to Grapevine, which was approximately 11 miles from Smithfield. He had to walk all the way home. Barber Cobb gave him a good teasing about free rides ("Memories of Clarence Gardner Cobb," 1972).

There was a "good bit" of cotton grown in the surrounding country, which kept the two Smithfield gins busy. Also, much fruit was grown at Smithfield and was packed in the local cannery which was on Main Street east of the town across the present day Davis Boulevard. John T. Overbey owned the Bank of Smithfield. It is said that he struck oil in Iowa Park, Texas. Overbey had two sons; one was a rancher, and the other one was a doctor. After his death, his sons liquidated the bank and used it as their residence.

During the Depression of the 1930s, when no one had a job or money, Cobb often cut hair as a favor to his customers. When people did not have cash, they gave him eggs, chickens, fruit, vegetables, or whatever they could spare. Cobb mentioned that men's attitudes changed through the years about work. Before and during the Depression they did not complain so much, and people worked hard. After the Depression he noticed that people didn't do any more than they had to ("Memories of Clarence Gardener Cobb," 1972).

Barber Cobb left some words for his Smithfield friends. They are as follows:

If I may indulge myself in a few personal comments, I would like to add that I have enjoyed a very good life. Most of my friends, though, have either died or moved away, and this saddens me. I have bought a plot in Smithfield Cemetery, because Smithfield is where I always intended to stay. My fondest dream was to live out my life in Smithfield, and I can honestly say that if I were given a choice, I wouldn't change a thing, but do it all over again with no regrets. ("Memories of Clarence Gardener Cobb," 1972)

Barber Cobb died in September 1986. He is buried in Smithfield Cemetery near his beloved town of Smithfield (W. Dunlap, personal communication, September 1992).

In 1920-1921 at Smithfield School, there were 162 students. The teachers were the same as in 1919-1920 except for one addition, Nellie Gray (Public School Directory, 1920-1921).

In 1921-1922 the Superintendent was C. S. Trotter. The teachers were A. R. Ridgway; Frances Bethany, and Laura Crawford, all of Smithfield. There were 150 students. The property valuation was \$374,404, while the tax rate remained \$.50 per \$100.00. The expected school tax revenue was \$1,870.20 (Public School Directory, 1921-1922).

In 1922 John T. White, from Keller, became Superintendent. The teachers were Mrs. A. G. Meacham, Mrs. J. D. Jones, and Bessie White. There were 163 students at Smithfield School in 1922 (Public School Directory, 1923-1924).

White graduated from North Texas State Teachers College before taking a teaching position at Smithfield School. He rose to the position of school superintendent at Smithfield School. After leaving Smithfield, he became the County Superintendent of Tarrant County schools in 1926. After resigning as county superintendent in 1933, he began studying law and received a law degree from the old Jefferson University at Dallas. He also attended Cordell Christian University in Oklahoma and the University of California. He maintained law offices in Fort Worth for more than 25 years and was active as an attorney until he retired because of bad health ("John T. White, Educator," date unknown).

Several years after White left Smithfield, a community near Fort Worth was named for him. The John T. White community and school is northeast of Handley. It is north of the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike and east of Handley Drive. The school became a part of the Fort Worth school system in early 1959 ("John T. White, Educator," date unknown).

White is buried in Bourland Cemetery in Keller. Students who attended Smithfield School in the early twenties still remember him with much love and affection (O. M. A. Barrier, personal communication, July 1992).

Hattie Helm West lived in the Florence School District in Keller. However, since she lived on John T. White's farm

and he was the principal and superintendent at Smithfield, he gave her family permission to go to Smithfield School. She began there in the second grade in 1923 and continued at Smithfield until she quit to get married, at the age of 16. She and her brothers often walked to school or got a ride with their dad or neighbors. It was a long way to the school, and she remembered walking when it was very cold. The teachers would let them warm by the huge black pot-bellied stove after they arrived, often being tardy from the long walk of five or six miles (H. H. West, personal communication, March 1993).

One thing she remembered about the school was the playground equipment. There was a tall pole with many chains to grab hold of and swing oneself by kicking the ground. There also was a see-saw. The young children played hide-and-seek, Red Rover, spin the tops, and marbles. The school was a big two-story brick building with a fire escape on the outside (H. H. West, personal communication, March 1993).

She remembered taking her lunch to school wrapped in a newspaper but does not know where they got the newspaper. They took biscuits and sausage, baked sweet potatoes, and fried pies to school.

For supplies they mostly had ink pens (ink staffs with bottles of ink to fit into the ink well) and paper. Once

she had a new fur-trimmed coat. She begged her mother to let her wear it to school. Finally, her mother consented, and someone knocked her bottle of ink over in her lap while she was wearing her beautiful new coat.

She loved to dust the erasers at school, as this was a chance to get out of school. The coal house was at the northeast corner of the building. She recalled that the big boys brought in the coal from the coal house.

She vividly remembered Frank Palmer coming to school in a buggy. She often felt sorry for the horse standing there all day. Others rode horses to school and left them on the school grounds until dismissal time. In the 1950s, Mr. West was on the Smithfield School Board when the West children, Kenneth and Sue were students at Smithfield School (H. H. West, personal communication, March 1993).

In 1926, Clarence C. White, brother of the former Smithfield Superintendent John T. White, became superintendent and principal of Smithfield Schools. He remained at Smithfield until the spring of 1935 (Public School Directory, 1926-1935).

The Depression Years 1930-1939

In 1930, what was to become known as the Great Depression was beginning. Society had moved from an agricultural base to an industrial base ("The Improvement of

Education," 1937). Even though the surrounding area of Smithfield was made up of farms, many of the men had gone to work in factories in or around the Smithfield and Fort Worth area. The families had continued to farm while the fathers went off to jobs outside the farm. In 1931, 4,500,000 men in the United States lost their jobs, and in 1932, three times that many joined the ranks of the unemployed. The national income level decreased to one-half of that prior to the crash of 1929 (Sann, 1957). The standard of living was decreased for approximately two-thirds of the American people ("The Improvement of Education," 1937). Farmers were experiencing the effects of the depressed economy.

President Roosevelt suggested that the federal government take responsibility for work relief programs (Smith, 1987).

During this time, the federal government created several agencies which provided both monetary relief and work relief for the unemployed. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), which later became known as the Works Project Administration, under the administration of the Federal Works Agency, provided the opportunity for unemployed persons to work and earn wages on various projects. The main projects of the WPA included repairing or building highways, libraries, sewer systems, public buildings, playgrounds, and recreation centers, in addition to the development of conservation projects. This program

began in 1935. Between 1936 and 1941, approximately one-fifth of the work force of the United States was involved in the WPA (Chudacoff, 1975). From July 1, 1935 until July 1, 1938, the WPA was responsible for the construction or improvement of more than 15,000 parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields ("Questions and Answers on the WPA," 1939). In addition to construction, the WPA sponsored community recreation activities. People came together to participate in sports, to listen to music, to do arts and crafts, and to listen to stories, all of which were provided by the WPA (Cline, 1939).

The recreation center at Smithfield was built by the WPA. It was one of two recreation centers built in Tarrant County by WPA ("New Recreation Center and its Chief Sponsor," 1935). It was completed in 1936 after having taken nine months to complete. The structure was 90 by 100 feet and contained a gymnasium, dressing rooms, a stage, and a basement. The walls were of concrete blocks ("New Recreation Center and its Chief Sponsor," 1935).

Cara Lee Zartman Petty (personal communication, October 1992) remembered marching to music in the gym and also plays put on by each class. Halloween carnivals, pie suppers, and donkey basketball games were all held in the gym. Funds raised at these events were used to buy teaching materials

for the school (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

The WPA also sent people to Smithfield to assist with recreation in the new gym and to assist in organizing a library for the school ("Recreation," 1936). Another WPA project, a children's story hour, was remembered by Geraldine Berry Hall. She heard the story of "Snow White" for the first time from WPA workers (G. B. Hall, personal communication, July 1992).

In July, 1931, beside the cemetery where many pioneers of Smithfield were buried stood the last few of a diminishing group of early settlers. They joined with younger native sons who came for the annual Smithfield reunion at Smithfield School.

Sarah Ann Blevins, who was 89 on June 13, 1931, held the distinction of being the oldest settler present. "As a girl of 17 she arrived in the Zion Community from Illinois in a prairie schooner in 1859. Three years later she was married to S. D. Sansom, the Zion Methodist minister, who died in 1899. She was well known at Smithfield as 'Grandma Sansom'" ("Smithfield Reunion," 1931).

J. C. Wood, 70, of Grapevine, who settled one mile north of Smithfield in 1878 also was present. He commented that the beautiful countryside had changed since he first

saw it. Much of the land had been cleared for crops and cattle.

"Basket-style dinner" was served. There were four speakers: J. D. Walker, age 70, who had lived at Smithfield thirty years before he moved away in 1891; Kate Gills and Mattie Clark McLaughlin, former teachers in Smithfield; and District Attorney Martin. There was much hymn singing. Also, old numbers such as "The Old Gang of Smithfield" were sung.

The punch barrel was presided over by Chester Hollis, and Mr. Autrey assisted him. Frank Estill, County Commissioner, furnished the punch.

The next gathering was announced for the first Sunday in July 1932. Smithfield residents were encouraged to remind all neighbors to come ("Smithfield Reunion," 1931).

In 1933, nearly 200 residents and former residents heard Judge Marvin Brown of the 96th District Court speak at the Fourteenth Annual Smithfield Reunion held at the Smithfield School. Paying tribute to the pioneers who founded the Smithfield community more than 75 years ago, the speaker praised the work of the settlers in establishing a community that has endured through the years.

Preliminary to Judge Brown's talk was the first memorial service directed by J. W. Heffington of Fort Worth, a member of the permanent reunion committee. Heffington

eulogized all of the former residents of the community who had died. Special mention was made of Mrs. J. M. Scott, Mrs. John Newton, Dr. H. C. Gilbert, Mrs. R. A. Pemberton, Mrs. S. D. Penny, and R. S. Cloud, all of whom were buried in the cemetery in the past year.

Reverend J. M. Scott, pastor of the Smithfield Methodist Church for the past 16 years and a Tarrant County preacher for the past 42 years, also spoke. He told of the first reunion at which Daniel Smith, one of the founders of the community, was the chief speaker. That first meeting was held in 1919 ("Two Hundred Reunited in Smithfield, Hear Address," 1933).

In 1935 records show that Smithfield was an independent community with a population of 137 in the town limits. Smithfield had nine businesses, three churches, and a school (Hallman, 1971). The school went through the eleventh grade and had a scholastic population of 189 ("Diplomas Given at Smithfield," 1935).

During the 1930s Clarence C. White was principal and superintendent of Smithfield School. He remained there until the spring of 1935 (Public School Directory, 1926-1935). White completed his years at Smithfield by presiding over graduation with 11 graduates. During his administration, he saw the enrollment of Smithfield School grow from 150 to 189 students and saw the teaching staff

grow from four to seven ("Diplomas Given at Smithfield," 1935).

In 1935, under White's direction, Smithfield began the first Smithfield PTA (Parent Teachers Association). The PTA became a major contributor for teaching materials (PTA Yearbook, 1935). The PTA supported projects to help buy not only teaching materials, but also sports equipment and audio-visual equipment such as movie projectors. These items provided for the enjoyment and better learning of the children (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992). The PTA presidents for the years 1935-1939 were Mrs. Ed Walker, Mrs. A. G. Meacham, Mrs. Moody Walker, Mrs. R. N. Riddle, and Mrs. B. L. Prickett (PTA Yearbooks, 1935-1939).

George Montgomery, Billie Autrey Montgomery, Dee Miller, Cara Lee Zartman Petty, William Parkman, and Geraldine Berry Hall were all students of Smithfield in the 1930s (W. Parkman, personal communication, August 1992). Charlie Ed Turner, Howard Davis, and Imogene Wilson Turner were also students at Smithfield School during that time and graduated in 1935 (C. E. Turner, personal communication, September 1992). Teachers during the thirties were Modena Turner, Miss Rogers, Martha W. Meissner, Maurine Shaw, and Miss Buise. Other teachers were Floy Smith, Gladys Winchester, and Berte C. Ragsdale (Report Cards of Dee

Miller, 1934, 1935, 1936; B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

A typical day at school in the early 1930s began at 8:30 a.m., with a recess from 10:00 to 10:20 a.m. Lunch was from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., and afternoon recess was at 2:30 p.m., at which time the first and second grades were dismissed. The remaining students were dismissed at 3:30 p.m. (G. R. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

Many of the students who lived close enough went home for lunch. Those who stayed on the school grounds brought lunches wrapped in newspaper. Sandwiches, cinnamon rolls, and fried pies were often swapped between students. In the wintertime G. R. Montgomery was glad to give up his boiled ham sandwich for a cold biscuit and fried rabbit. G. R.'s dad worked for Swift & Company Meat Products and had access to plenty of meat (G. R. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

The games the older students played were softball, touch football, and basketball, while the younger children played jacks, jump rope, and hopscotch. There were seasons for flying kites, playing marbles and mumblety-peg, spinning tops, and playing with yo-yos (G. R. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

The school building was heated by coal. Each room had a big coal stove. These stoves were attended by Mr. Tarwater, the first custodian. Doris Shipman remembered Tarwater being covered each day with black from the coal. She remembered Tarwater as being a big man who loved all of the students and the students loving him (D. H. Shipman, personal communication, June 1992).

Geraldine Berry Hall's favorite teacher was Modena Turner. She remembered Mrs. Turner as having a "special interest" in her and also making her feel important (G. B. Hall, personal communication, July 1992). Cara Lee Zartman Petty also remembered Modena Turner as being her favorite teacher. Mrs. Turner taught Petty home economics (C. L. Z. Petty, personal communication, October 1992). G. R. Montgomery and Billie Autrey Montgomery remembered Modena Turner as their favorite teacher. She was their teacher in 1930 for the first grade (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992; G. R. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

Teachers Gladys Winchester and R. N. Riddle had a great influence on William Parkman's life and his education. He remembered Mr. Riddle as being especially good in math (W. Parkman, personal communication, August 1992). Cara Lee Zartman Petty remembered Mr. Riddle's teaching world history and algebra. "He did not go on to a new subject until

everyone knew what he was teaching" (C. L. Z. Petty, personal communication, October 1992). She studied spelling, history, reading, language, arithmetic, writing, geography, and music and learned to read by phonics (C. L. Z. Petty, personal communication, October 1992).

In 1935, under the direction of Clarence C. White, principal, the eleventh grade boys built a small one-room white building in the manual labor class. Two of the graduating students who worked on the building were Charlie Ed Turner and Howard Davis. The building was used for four years for the first grade (H. Davis, personal communication, August 1992).

Principal and superintendent Clarence C. White was replaced by Roy Clendening in the fall of 1935. He served in this position for two years. Ruby Lee Autrey Jansky (personal communication, June 1992) remembered Clendening as a very caring man.

Until 1936 all students provided their own transportation to school. In 1936 Smithfield School bought its first school bus.

The Smithfield boys and girls who ride the school bus enjoy it very much. The bus is always warm and comfortable, which makes the children have a desire to be waiting for it. When it is raining, snowing, or sleet, the children have nothing to worry about, because they know they can depend on the bus. The bus is a new 1936 Ford. ("The puddle jumper," 1936)

The first bus driver was Oscar B. Tallman. Jim Holder was the next bus driver, who drove for quite a few years (D. Miller, personal communication, September 1992). In 1936 the high school students began being transported to Birdville High School or Carter Riverside High School because there was not transportation available.

Jansky remembered Clendening's waiting on the high school bus that transferred students to Amon Carter Riverside High School or Birdville High School. Each morning he climbed aboard the bus to help each high school student with his assignment in math. "He was determined that all Smithfield students would pass math. He did not want any of the Smithfield students to be laughed at by the town kids" (R. L. Jansky, personal communication, June 1992).

In 1937, R. N. Riddle became the principal and superintendent at Smithfield School. His wife also taught at Smithfield School during this time, and his three children attended Smithfield School (D. Miller, personal communication, September 1992).

The provisions that were made at Smithfield for early childhood education were informal. In the early years of Zion and Smithfield, the parents taught their own preschool children at home. The Bible and other books that were in the home were read to them. They also learned nursery

rhymes from their mothers. The mothers either worked on the farms or in the house cooking, canning, sewing, and quilting (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992).

Either of these occupations allowed the mother to keep the young children with her and to teach them. Often, older sisters cared for the children. In both instances the young child had constant communication with another family member.

Children who were 4- and 5-year-olds often were sent to school with older brothers and sisters. Julia Davis Cox remembered going to school in 1935 with her big brothers sometimes after Christmas, before she was old enough to go to school. The teacher gave her a book to learn to read, and before the year was over she could read the entire book (J. D. Cox, personal communication, August 1992). Even though this was in 1935, Sitton and Rowold (1987) cite this happening in the 1800s also.

The third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade report cards from Smithfield Elementary during 1934 through 1936 are basically the same except for the fifth grade, which began studying history. The subjects which were taught were arithmetic, drawing, geography, language, reading, health, spelling, writing, and music. All of the subjects were given letter grades. Deportment was given a number grade. There were no checklists for citizenship (Report cards of Dee Miller, 1934, 1935, 1936).

In 1937 the style of the report card changed with the coming of a new superintendent, R. N. Riddle. The subjects continued to be graded with the letters A, B, C, and D, except for the exams and conduct, which were given number grades. Physical education began to be graded as a subject (Report card of Dee Miller, 1936-1937).

In 1938 the seventh grade began studying science and civics. There was a checklist included for citizenship. The grading system for citizenship was: "+" for above normal, "av" for average, and "-" for below average. The citizenship checklist included the following items: courtesy, cooperation, obedience, industry and effort, thrift, dependableness, health habits, neatness, and self-reliance. The word "deportment" was changed to "conduct" (Report card of Dee Miller, 1938).

In 1939 the citizenship checklist was graded with the letter grades A, B, C, and D. In the fifth grade the subject science was added and taught for the first semester, and civics also was added and taught the second semester (Report card of Geraldine Berry, 1939).

The students in the thirties and forties were given several types of standardized tests even as students are given various tests today. The Harlow Test, Form C, was given to the seventh graders at Smithfield on April 26, 1939 (Report card of Dee Miller, 1938-1939).

In 1939 a lunchroom was opened which served hot plate lunches. The lunch room was housed in the small white building which was built in 1935 by the eleventh-grade boys. Mrs. T. D. Hay was the business manager of the cafeteria ("Smithfield School Lunches Success," 1939).

Smithfield School Constructs Another New
Building and the Community Begins a
Volunteer Fire Department

1940-1955

The fourth graders at Smithfield School were given the Metropolitan Test on May 14, 1940 (Report card of Gerald Berry, 1939-1940). The eighth-grade class at Smithfield School was given the Stanford Binet Test in the spring of 1940 before entering the ninth grade at Carter Riverside in the fall of 1940 (Report card of Dee Miller, 1940).

The report card continued to be graded by letter grades. A key to the grading system was included: A = 90 - 100; B = 80 - 90; C = 70 - 80; D = 60 - 70. A key also was given for the citizenship checklist: "+" means yes; "-" means no (Report card of Bart May, 1940).

In 1941 the entire report card remained the same except for the citizenship checklist. The citizenship checklist used "yes" and "no" to report the student's citizenship and behavior (Report card of Bart May, 1941). The first graders

were given the Harlow Achievement Test on April 21, 1941 (Report card of Bart May, 1941).

In the 1940s, Johnny Dunlap attended Smithfield School. He remembered a teacher named Vera Redding, who still resides in Smithfield. He also remembered studying the basic subjects and art. The math they learned was basic; add, subtract, and divide. During his time at Smithfield, the tenth grade was added, and he was moved up a grade to the fifth and missed the fourth (J. Dunlap, personal communication, September 1992).

In 1946-1947 while the school was being repaired, the students had classes in the gymnasium. Partitions were put up throughout the gym to block the noise (J. Dunlap, personal communication, September 1992).

From 1947 to 1956, Aubrey C. Little was the principal and superintendent. Little had a bachelor's degree of science and a master's degree of education. He attended Texas Wesleyan College and Texas Christian University, both of Fort Worth. While he was principal, he also taught history to the upper grades (Payroll reports, Smithfield School, 1947-1956).

In the late 1940s, a tiny bright-eyed, spunky lady with a hunched back named Tina Isbell came to teach the first grade at Smithfield School. The first grade was a choice place for her as the students were about the same height as

she. There is not a lot recorded about Isbell; however, at the annual Smithfield reunions, someone always brings a group picture of the first-grade class with Isbell. This is a memorable picture no matter what year it was taken, as it is always the wedding picture. For Isbell's end-of-school play, which was required, she always had a wedding with full costume. Students speak fondly of her, and many of her first-grade students have done well in acquiring an education which speaks well for her teaching and laying a solid foundation for reading and arithmetic (C. Gibson, personal communication, June 1992). Isbell continued teaching at Smithfield until 1954, when the school board did not renew her contract (Smithfield School Board minutes, 1954).

During the 1940s, there was little outside recreation and no televisions at Smithfield (H. Davis, personal communication, August 1992). Therefore, books were a precious item, and there were very few books available. The residents looked upon books as their friends (M. Cantrell, personal communication, June 1992). These books were read to the younger children, either in the afternoon as they were about to take a nap or in the evening after the chores were done (M. Cantrell, personal communication, June 1992). Oftentimes, the older children who were in school taught the younger children what they had learned at school. They

taught the younger ones their alphabet and even to read before going to school (M. Cantrell, personal communication, June 1992). It is reported that one first-grade girl, in Isbell's class in 1947, taught her preschool sister to read. The younger sister, Connie Cantrell, wanted to go to school very much but could not because of being under age. In the afternoons when the sister, Jeanette, came home, they played school. She taught Connie what she had learned that day. The next year, after attending part of the first grade, Connie was double-promoted and went to the second grade (M. Cantrell, personal communication, June 1992). This was not difficult, as grades 1 and 2 were in the same classroom and were taught by the same teacher, Tina Isbell (Grade books from Smithfield, 1947-1948). The two girls went through school and graduated together in 1959 from Birdville High School (M. Cantrell, personal communication, June 1992). Many other older sisters went home to "play school" with the younger siblings.

The Starnes family moved to their 40-acre farm in 1949, while Gary was in the second grade. Gary, Jamie, and Kenny went to school in Smithfield. Gary remembered Eunice Toon (second grade), Jo McFadin (English), Raymond Smoot (Math), and A. C. Little (History). His favorite memory of Smithfield School was listening to Little relate eyewitness accounts of World War II. Little was chaplain aboard ship

and experienced torpedoes and air attacks in the Pacific. He was the reason that Gary majored in history (G. Starnes, personal communication, June 1992).

Hazel Cantrell Lowrance recalled Isbell as being her first-grade teacher in 1950. Isbell often allowed her students to stand in a chair and put up bulletin boards as she had a back problem and the first-grade students were almost as tall as she. Even though she was short in height, the respect that the first and second graders and their parents gave her made her 6 feet tall in their eyes. The subject she emphasized most was reading. Isbell no longer lives, but the products of her teaching go on and on. "A teacher is forever" is quite true of Isbell--she taught the writer of this paper to read and after 28 years in the classroom, the writer continues to teach students to read and has had several students who majored in education and are now teaching. Other teachers Lowrance remembered from Smithfield Elementary School are Eunice Toon for the second grade; Mrs. Littlejohn, fourth; Essie King, fifth; Raymond Smoot and Jo McFadin, seventh (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

In 1950-1951, Tina Isbell was the teacher for both the first and second grade classes. Both classes met in the same room. She taught first-grade reading for 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon, with 15 minutes

in the afternoon for phonics. The first graders also studied numbers separately for 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon. The first- and second-grade classes studied social studies together for 20 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and studied nature of Tuesday and Thursday for 20 minutes. The first- and second-grade classes had art together daily for 15 minutes. They also had music together daily for 15 minutes.

The second graders had two 20-minute periods for reading, one 15-minute period for phonics, 15 minutes for language, 15 minutes for handwriting, and 15 minutes for spelling. Unlike the first graders, who had two 20-minute periods for numbers, the second graders had only one 20-minute period for numbers. There was a 15-minute recess both in the morning and in the afternoon, while there was a 45-minute lunch period. The students began school at 8:30 and were dismissed at 2:45 (Class schedule, 1950-1951).

It is unknown how many second graders were in this combination first- and second-grade class; however, there were 23 first graders. With the second graders added, this would have been a very large class for one teacher (Class roll, 1950).

Seven of those first-grade students continue to live in the local Fort Worth-Smithfield area. They are: Walter Collins of Weatherford; William Dutton, who teaches school

in the Azle Independent School District; Jody Jester; Dick Lewis; Kay Brown Alread, who was secretary at Smithfield Elementary from 1965-1989; Carolyn Schneider Smith; and Hazel Cantrell Lowrance, all of Smithfield. Five of those seven graduated from high school together in 1962 (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

Linda Kay Brown Alread went to school at Smithfield from 1950 to 1958. She remembered the school building as being comfortable and having a warm feeling. It did not seem old to her then, because it was all she knew. The lunchroom was outside in a little white building. Part of the playground was between the school building and the lunchroom. The ball fields were to the east of the building with Worthington's cattle pasture bordering on the east and the Smithfield Cemetery bordering on the west. "Aunt Frankie" Lewis' house and garden was the border on the north, and Smithfield Road was the border on the west side (L. K. B. Alread, personal communication, September 1992).

A fond memory Alread had was of the aroma coming from the lunchroom during the morning recess. Aunt Frankie Lewis was a cook in the lunchroom for many years. When lunch was ready, she would hang a white cup towel in the window. The student watchers made the announcement of lunch, and the classes began filing out to the tiny, one-room lunchroom (L. K. B. Alread, personal communication, September 1992).

The library was an important part of Alread's school life at Smithfield School. She loved the class plays and remembered the mothers making the brightly colored costumes. Walking home from school was also important to her as it meant getting to talk to schoolmates. The events she remembered that were held in the gymnasium were Halloween carnivals and basketball games. Her favorite memory of Smithfield School was playing under the big oak trees at recess. While at Smithfield School, she studied Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Geography. She remembered learning to read by phonics and studying Arithmetic (the "old kind") (L. K. B. Alread, personal communication, September 1992).

Eunice Toon taught the second grade at Smithfield School from 1951 to 1954. She retired from teaching in 1971 from the Hurst-Eules-Bedford Independent School District. Toon graduated from high school in 1924 at Cooper, Texas. She attended Mary Hardin Baylor College at Belton, Texas, in 1925, and received a teaching certificate. She later went to East Texas State College in Commerce and finished her degree in 1948 at North Texas State Teachers' College.

Toon had pleasant memories of the Smithfield School. She remembered Bert Starnes, who was on the school board. "He was very interested in choosing teachers who were well-qualified, had an ability to handle various situations, liked children, and could communicate well with the

students." Toon recalled the parents from the school being very interested in their children and very cooperative. She taught the first or second grades all of her teaching years except for one and one-half years in 1937-1938. She strongly believed in the phonics approach to reading (E. Toon, personal communication, March 1993).

In 1952 the school board voted to pay Mattie Belle Lewis \$10.00 per month as librarian (Smithfield School Board minutes, October 1952). Her room was in the hallway and was about the size of a coat closet. She came to the school for one-half day on Thursday (L. K. B. Alread, personal communication, September 1992). In October 1952, the Smithfield School Board also voted to connect on to O. B. Leonard's water system and to get a straight-line telephone (Smithfield School Board minutes, October 1952).

In December 1952, the school board voted to allow the Frank B. McMahon Company to handle a \$40,000 bond issue at the rate of 3 1/4% for the first 10 maturities, 3 1/2% for the second, 3 3/4% for the third, and 4% for all over 30 years. They also voted to employ Stanley Brown, Architect (Smithfield School Board minutes, December 1952).

In February 1953, a motion carried to discontinue the current water system (a well) and to move the equipment from the school grounds at once. A tax rate of \$1.00 also was

established (Smithfield School Board minutes, February 1953).

On March 16, 1953, a motion carried to apply for a new 60-passenger bus. It was reported that the \$40,000 bond issue was voted on with 44 for and 16 against. On March 31, 1953, Walter Wilson was appointed as chairman of the building committee with Marion West and Fred Barney composing the remainder of the committee (Smithfield School Board minutes, March 1953).

On June 11, 1953, D. T. Neuville's bid for \$23,126 as the general contractor was accepted to build a new building for the upper-grade students (seventh and eighth grades). Gardner and Barber Electric Company's bid of \$985.77 for the electrical work and \$3,737.15 for the plumbing were accepted (Smithfield School Board minutes, June 1953).

The Smithfield Fire Department was founded in January of 1953 by about 20 people who met in the school gymnasium in December 1952. A stimulation for organizing the fire department came from a huge fire blown by a north wind on Thanksgiving Day, 1952, which swept an area 5 miles long and a mile wide, including the hill on which Northeast Tarrant County Junior College now stands. This fire was fought with buckets of water, wet tow sacks, and common house brooms. The wind ceased at nightfall, and the fire was topped out

south of Harwood Road (K. Autrey, personal communication, March 1993).

The Smithfield Fire Department was originally manned by volunteers. Jack Grey was elected fire chief. Other officers appointed were B. C. Redding, Ralph Wade, H. T. Worthington, and as advisor, Haltom City Fire Chief O. D. Stowe. The fire station was located on Main Street in Smithfield (Abbott, 1977).

The first fire engine Smithfield bought was a 1941 Ford. It was purchased for \$2,250.00 from Olney, Texas. City officials of Olney wanted \$2,500.00 for the fire truck, but the Smithfield residents had the cash, and they settled for \$2,250.00 ("Veteran fireman hopes to retire-Like truck," 1965.) The truck was a 500-gallon pumper which was an old ex-army truck. A year later the department bought a brand new white Ford engine with an 800-gallon tank for water. In 1955 five of the firemen bought a two-ton chassis and on their own time, after their day of work at their jobs, spent their nights building a 1,000-gallon tank to go on the two-ton chassis. The last truck bought was a 600-gallon tank, International Truck (Abbott, 1977).

B. C. Redding stated that most fires were from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. One bad fire started on Amundson Street and worked its way up to Shady Grove Baptist Church. Five miles long, the fire destroyed one house and a chicken

house. The firemen used 37 pieces of equipment. The fire lasted from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. the following morning (Abbott, 1977).

On March 20, 1954, the board voted to renew the contracts of Eunice Toon, Rilla Sharpless, Mrs. Harris, and Mrs. Moreland. The board voted not to renew the contracts of Tina Isbell and Mrs. Littlejohn (Smithfield School Board minutes, March 1954). On June 15, 1954, the Smithfield School Board accepted the resignations of Eunice Toon and Rilla Sharpless (Smithfield School Board minutes, June 1954).

The teachers' salaries in 1954 to 1956 ranged from \$3,129 to \$3,732. A. C. Little, the principal, made \$4,522 (Payroll records, 1954-1956).

From 1954 to 1956, Essie King taught the fifth grade at Smithfield School. She was born March 12, 1908, in Montague County, Texas. She attended Texas Wesleyan College in Fort Worth, Texas (Payroll records, 1954-1956). King quit teaching at Smithfield in 1956, the year Little left the school. They both began teaching in the Birdville Independent School System. Currently, she resides in North Richland Hills, Texas. She reported that she still walks every day for exercise and also works in her flower garden at age 85 (E. King, personal communication, October 1992).

Jo McFadin began teaching at Smithfield School in 1955 and taught there until her retirement in 1972. She was married to John McFadin, who was president of Smithfield Elementary PTA for one year. Jo McFadin taught the seventh grade from 1955 until 1957. From 1957 until her retirement in 1972, she taught the third grade. Many Smithfield students remembered her form of discipline as being the golden ruler, a thick, heavy golden ruler, which she used in the palm of the student's hand in front of the class (Jo McFadin, personal communication, October 1992).

On August 3, 1954, the school board appointed Earl Newman, Bert Starnes, Fred Barney, and J. R. Crane to collect bids to repair the gym floor (Smithfield School Board minutes, August 1954). On February 15, 1955, the board voted to replace the floor and subfloor of the gym. They also were to have the cracks stopped in the walls, to make breather holes in the base on the outside with a star drill, and to waterproof the walls (Smithfield School Board minutes, February 1955). On April 5, 1955, the school board accepted an insurance check of \$2,779.77 for gym repair (Smithfield School Board minutes, April 1955).

Smithfield School Consolidates with Birdville
Independent School District and Smithfield,
Texas, Annexes with North Richland
Hills 1956-1972

On April 28, 1956, the school board voted to "install" the ninth grade at the Smithfield School (Smithfield School Board minutes, April 1955). On September 18, 1956, it was voted to have Principal Little to install the necessary facilities to equip a science room (Smithfield School Board minutes, September 1956). On November 3, 1956, the school board voted to contact Birdville ISD to consider consolidation with Smithfield School (Smithfield School Board minutes, November 1956).

Mittie Caughey Thornton moved to Smithfield in 1956 while she was in the eighth grade. The family selected the Smithfield area because of the new style of the school building. Having had polio and using leg braces and crutches made it difficult for Thornton to attend just any school. The new building only had one low step at the entrance which made it easier for her to step up. She remembered Jo McFadin and Raymond Smoot as teachers and Little as the principal (M. C. Thornton, personal communication, September 1992).

On February 19, 1957, the school board accepted the proposed contract for consolidation with the Birdville Schools (Smithfield School Board minutes, February 1957). On February 23, 1957, architects Richard Burnett and W. H. Warton and bondsman Mr. Hendricks discussed preliminary drawings and bonds with the school board to add on to the present building (Smithfield School Board minutes, February 1957). On March 19, 1957, Little resigned his position as superintendent, principal, and teacher (Smithfield School Board minutes, March 1957). The year after leaving Smithfield School, he taught history at Birdville High School. In December 1957, he was crossing the street and fell dead of a heart attack right before the students' eyes (G. Starnes, personal communication, June 1992).

On May 2, 1957, a motion was made to raise the present tax evaluation from 25% to 40% of the property value. On May 30, 1957, the final building plans, as submitted by Warton and Burnett, were accepted for the new building (Smithfield School Board minutes, May 1957).

On June 19, 1957, the board voted to accept the evaluation of the Equalization Board and set the tax rate at \$.80 on the hundred instead of \$1.00 on the hundred. Also, the board voted to pay the teachers an additional \$300 per year above the state schedule (Smithfield School Board minutes, June 1957).

On July 23, 1957, the board voted to hire William E. Walts as superintendent, principal, and teacher of Smithfield School for \$6,300 with a \$.06 per mile gas mileage for necessary school work. Walts also was hired as lunchroom manager, as administrator of the building project, as textbook custodian, and to contact the necessary personnel and oversee the repair and painting of the old building. On July 29, 1957, the motion carried to raise the tax rate from \$.80 on the hundred to \$1.00 on the hundred. Bids were accepted for the new cafetorium and six primary classrooms (Smithfield School Board minutes, July 1957).

When I came to Smithfield in 1957, it was not part of the Birdville Schools but was independent. There were five members of the school board when I was hired: Mr. Luster, Mr. Compton, Mr. Kidwell, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Knight.

There were six grades with six classrooms, a book room, lounge, nurse's office, and an office for the principal with room for a secretary, although we only had a part-time secretary. Her name was Mrs. Frances Golden. The classrooms were on either side of the office, and the building was a U-shape.

The seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades went to Birdville District with the seniors having a choice of Birdville or Carter High. Tuition was paid by the Smithfield Independent School District.

Our student body consisted of 235 students. In one wing we had first through third, one wing fourth through sixth. There were six teachers the first year, and I was the sixth-grade teacher so I was part-time principal.

In the 1958-59 school year, we were voted into the Birdville Independent School District. Then all the high school students went to Birdville. We had a gym that was destroyed during a storm in 1958. It was never rebuilt.

John Autrey, who lived right across the street from the school, was our crossing guard for many years.

Jim Holder was our first custodian, and he drove the bus. We had four ladies who prepared the lunches, and the lunchroom was in a separate building.

We had a very active PTA that was always working for the interest of the school. There were many carnivals held and community plays. These were well attended by the parents and grandparents.

A cafetorium was built in 1958, and six new classrooms were added. In 1965, there was another addition of several classrooms on the primary wing.

I was at Smithfield Elementary until 1972, and the memories that I have of Smithfield are how nice it was to know all the children and most of all the parents and that I was able to call all of them by name. I see many of them from time-to-time, and we always have to share some story of our days at Smithfield. There were about 600 students there when I left. (W. E. Walts, personal communication, October 1992)

In July 1957 when William E. Walts was hired to be principal and teach the sixth grade, the school board agreed to hire a part-time secretary to assist him (Smithfield School Board minutes, July 1957). Pete Adams was on the school board and also attended the same church as the Burly Golden family. Adams suggested that they hire Frances Golden for secretary. Billy Bob, her youngest child, was in the second grade, so Golden had all of her children in school. She decided to take the job, "after praying about it and deciding this was God's will" (F. Golden, personal communication, October 1992). Golden worked with Walts as secretary until the spring of 1958 when Smithfield merged

with Birdville. Birdville said they did not need a secretary; however, they rehired her in the fall of 1961.

Golden was the first paid secretary of Smithfield School. She made \$1.00 an hour when Smithfield School first hired her (Payroll reports, 1957). She was secretary of the school until 1974. "Mr. Walts taught me a lot. He was always patient and kind, not only to me, but also to the children and everyone" (F. Golden, personal communication, October 1992).

Smithfield residents voted to annex with North Richland Hills in 1958. At this time, the Smithfield Fire Station became the first fire station that North Richland Hills had. In 1965, North Richland Hills replaced the 1941 truck with a \$12,000.00 rig which was assigned to the Smithfield station.

Later, the Smithfield Fire Station became North Richland Hills Station 1. After annexing with North Richland Hills, Frank Kook remained the fire chief and hired the first paid fireman in 1965. In 1966, he hired two more firemen (Abbott, 1977).

In 1958 Smithfield residents voted to consolidate with the Birdville Independent School District. In September 1958 all Smithfield School students became Birdville school students. The district was no longer independent. Wiley G. Thomas was Superintendent of the Birdville Independent

School District at that time (Ray, 1965). He served as superintendent from 1944 to 1979.

Thomas grew up and went to school in the Birdville area. He entered the first grade in Birdville in 1922. The school had become independent only one year before in 1921. At the time he entered, students went to grades 9 or 10 in the one red brick building, and then most transferred to high school in the Fort Worth Independent School District.

The facility which replaced the frame building was built of bricks in 1920 and could hold 180 students. The brick building was demolished in 1956. "In the twenties it did not have a dining room, and most of us would bring a sack lunch," Thomas said. Thomas was in Birdville's first graduating class in 1933. After getting a bachelor's degree from Texas Wesleyan College in 1937, he returned to Birdville as a teacher and became superintendent seven years later in 1944 ("Wiley G. Thomas," 1986).

Howard Nix (personal communication, November 1992) taught the sixth grade at Smithfield Elementary School from 1962 to 1968, with William E. Walts as principal. Nix recalled that they had team sports each day after school for the fifth and sixth grades. The sports were seasonal starting with flag football in the fall and then basketball. The next sport they played was fast-pitch softball and then volleyball which included the girls. The last sport they

had in the spring was track. They traveled to other elementary campuses in Birdville each Thursday. "When Pee-Wee football came in, our flag football died. Everyone wanted to wear the pads and look for real" (H. Nix, personal communication, November 1992).

In the 1960s, each teacher at Smithfield Elementary School was required to do two plays per year in which all students had an opportunity to be on stage. "The superintendent, Wiley G. Thomas, wanted every child to be included in these plays" (H. Nix, personal communication, November 1992).

At Smithfield Elementary, Nix remembered that each grade level had two sections with sometimes as many as 35 to 40 per class. There was no air conditioning nor planning period. Each teacher served bus duty as early as 7:15 a.m. The primary bus students were kept in the cafeteria after school until the buses ran from the high school and junior high around 4:00.

Nix's favorite memory was taking the census each year in January. Visiting in the homes of each of his students was the highlight of the year. "I enjoyed the country kids, and Principal Walts was a positive person with whom to work" (H. Nix, personal communication, November 1992).

In 1962-1963, according to Bart Alan May's report card in the fourth grade, all of the subjects graded remained the

same as in the 1940s except for history and civics, which were added. The wording on the citizenship list was slightly different. The items which were covered on the citizenship checklist were as follows: consideration for others, courteous, thinks before acting, respects authority, obeys, works consistently, talks too much, recognizes the value of time, keeps clean, does not work, lunchroom manners, and works independently. The following key for the citizenship checklist was given: "A check indicates needed improvement." An explanation of marks was also given: "A - Excellent, B - Good, C - Fair, D - Unsatisfactory, F - Below Standard for Promotion" (Report card of Bart Alan May, 1962-1963).

Myrene Montgomery Morrison was born in Smithfield in 1953 to G. R. and Billie Montgomery. Her mother, Billie Autrey Montgomery, also was born in Smithfield in 1923. She had one younger brother, George (Nubbin). G. R. and Billie owned nine acres one mile south of the main part of Smithfield. This was part of the original homestead of G. R.'s parents and was later sold and became home for the north Richland Hills Post Office.

Myrene started to school at Smithfield Elementary in 1960 in the second grade. She remembered the annual Christmas program at school; however, it seemed to her that her best friend, Debbie Bell, always got to be Mary in the

Christmas program while Myrene was always an angel. The halos of gold garland which stuck in her head and itched horribly were an unpleasant memory of being an angel (M. M. Morrison, personal communication, October 1992).

Virtually all of the shopping then was done at Leonard Brothers' Department Store in Fort Worth. "It was a long trip down Belknap to get anywhere in Fort Worth." However, there were few stores from which to shop, and the major ones were downtown.

Myrene recalled the teachers bringing television sets to school so that the students could watch the launches of the first space flights.

During the Cuban missile crisis, we had drills of missile attack. It was a frightening time. Fallout shelters, adequate food supplies, and being separated from our families were real concerns for us. Some of my friends and I carried miniature boxes of raisins in our purses so we would have something to eat in case of a bombing. The mothers volunteered to drive carloads of school children to the fallout shelter. If anything happened, we were to go to Gainesville which is 70 miles away.

I was in the fifth grade when President Kennedy was shot, and I remember the principal, Mr. Walts, playing the broadcast over the speaker system and my teacher, Mrs. Jackson, writing the word assassination on the blackboard. She had to think hard to remember the word. (Nowadays, it is a common word.) We were studying Japan in geography, and I remember our books were open to a page that had a picture of Mount Fuji. Even though we were so young, the moment was vivid and engraved on all of us.

As kids growing up in Smithfield, we were able to enjoy many activities that children today cannot. Debbie and I would walk home from church

and to each other's house. We enjoyed trick-or-treating with little supervision and not a thought of harm coming to us. Grandma Bell's was a must, because she always had popcorn balls on Halloween, as did Tilly Sims. (M. M. Morrison, personal communication, October 1992)

Carolyn Estill Feese (personal communication, September 2, 1992) attended Smithfield School in grades 1 through 6, from 1964 to 1970. Every grade had two teachers. The first through the fourth were in the new wing, and the fifth and sixth grades were in the old wing. W. E. Walts was the principal, and Frances Golden was the secretary/nurse. Howard Nix was the only male teacher at that time.

In the first grade, Feese remembered reading round robin in reading groups in the Dick and Jane series with Tip and Mitten. She vividly remembered looking at someone else's paper in math and having to stay after school. Being a shy child, she was scared and really did not understand what she had done wrong. As she watched the other boys and girls line up to go home, she began feeling bad. While Martha Hubbard, her first-grade teacher, was taking the other boys and girls to the door for dismissal, she began feeling worse. Soon she felt all alone and very sad. Hubbard soon returned to talk with Feese about cheating. She realized Feese, at her young age, did not understand what she had done wrong. Feese does not remember what Hubbard said, but she does remember the hug she was given

and that everything seemed okay the next day (C. E. Feese, personal communication, September 2, 1992).

In the second grade she remembered the fall/Halloween play where she was dressed as a black cat in a costume which was made by her mother. Feese also played a song on the piano for the play.

In the third grade Feese remembered that Jo McFadin had a very low voice. "I remember her telling me that she had taught my Uncle Ron; therefore I felt that she must be very, very old to have been teaching when he went to school." Her fondest memory of McFadin is that she taught Feese "a lot about math" (C. E. Feese, personal communication, September 2, 1992).

It was during the fourth grade with Jackie Slaughter that the new math was introduced. The change from the old math methods to the new math methods was hard for Feese. Slaughter and Peggy Harvey taught several subjects together. One of these combination times was in art, which Slaughter loved. Feese remembered making candles and splatter paint cards at Christmas time.

Feese's fifth-grade year was an election year. Earline Foy's class had their own presidential election after having researched their choice of candidates and giving a presidential speech. The candidates that year were Nixon, Humphrey, and Wallace, and the year was 1968. Also, during

the fifth grade, Feese was in a Christmas play in which she was a moonbeam. There were six children who were moonbeams with shiny dresses, sparkly hose, and a crown of tinsel. Her grandmother and mother made her costume. She was the center moonbeam because she was the tallest (C. E. Feese, personal communication, September 2, 1992).

In the sixth grade Pat Ford, in his first teaching year, was Feese's teacher. She was one of four girls in a roomful of boys. At open house in March, Ford reported to Feese's mother that she had discovered boys. Feese wondered how she could have helped but discover boys when there were so many boys around and so few girls with whom to associate. Ford read to the class daily after lunch. Her favorite story was Island of the Blue Dolphin. She also remembered Where the Red Fern Grows and Old Yeller. Several times Feese thought Ford would be mad at her for something she did, but in turn, he would make her laugh at herself. He always played ball and other games with the students at recess. They often played volleyball on the blacktop because there was no gym (C. E. Feese, personal communication, September 2, 1992).

One of Feese's favorite memories about school at Smithfield is the Fall Carnival. The carnival booths would be set up between the building wings with lights strung between booths. It was a family affair and had many

different booths. There was always a Country Store (with used items), an auction of new goods which were donated by local merchants, and there would be a dinner served in the school cafeteria. Always out in the booths there were plenty of good things to eat such as chili pie, hot dogs, nachos, Cokes, and Dr. Peppers. Some of the booths were: the cake walk, spook house, bottle ring, and one year there was a hayride and a jail house. That year the theme was western. If you did not dress in western clothes, you went to jail.

In 1975 and 1976, while Feese was in the eleventh and twelfth grades, she became involved with a homemaking class that allowed students to go to a kindergarten class and be an assistant to a teacher for two hours twice weekly. Feese was assigned to Hazel Lowrance's kindergarten class. She says, "Through the example, guidance, and supervision of Mrs. Lowrance, I decided to go into teaching. I received my teaching certificate in 1981 from Hardin Simmons in Abilene, Texas." Feese taught school for five years before she became a full-time housewife and mother (C. E. Feese, personal communication, September 2, 1992).

Martha Hubbard was a first-grade teacher at Smithfield Elementary School. She began teaching at Smithfield in the early 1960s and taught there until she retired because of physical problems in the early 1980s.

In the early 1960s there were only two first-grade teachers, Hubbard and Claudine Williams. At Smithfield Elementary the principal, W. E. Walts, gave the parents the privilege of choosing their child's teacher. This was not a problem in the first grade as almost every parent liked both teachers. Both of these teachers were very dedicated and taught their students to read by phonics. The most important subjects to Hubbard and Williams were reading and math. The next two most important subjects were spelling and handwriting (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

Williams was Hubbard's co-worker during the 1960s. In the early 1970s, she became elementary consultant in the Birdville Independent School District and supervised the kindergarten classes from their inception in 1973 until she became an elementary principal. Williams had a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Texas Wesleyan College. She also had an administrator's certificate and became certified to teach kindergarten (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

In the spring of 1965, Hazel Cantrell did student teaching at Smithfield Elementary School. She was hired to begin teaching there in September 1965 and continued teaching there until September 1989. She taught second

grade for 4 years, third grade for 4 years, and kindergarten for 16 years, from its inception in 1973 until 1989.

When I began teaching in 1965, I taught the third grade and, later, the second grade. We taught all of the language arts subjects in the morning. Language arts consisted of reading, spelling, and language. The State of Texas required 120 minutes of reading instruction each day, math 30 minutes per day, and spelling 15 minutes per day. We were also required to teach science, social studies, health, music, and handwriting. We did not have a special music teacher in our school for several years. We also did not have a P.E. teacher. Our P.E. periods were actually recess, where all of the second and third grades went outside together. This was good for the students, because they could play with other age groups, thereby learning to get along socially in the world. It also was good for the students because their recess time was unstructured which is needed by children in the elementary grades. Having unorganized games and unstructured play periods gave the students an opportunity to be creative and a chance to organize games, which would be an asset in later life. The recess periods were well supervised as every teacher stayed with their class. We had two recess periods, one a 15-minute break in the morning and a 30-minute recess in the afternoon. The students were allowed to go to the cafeteria at morning break to buy milk, which also was beneficial to the students. The milk prices were subsidized by the federal government; therefore, the cost was inexpensive. There were no free breakfasts; as a matter of fact, there were no breakfasts at school. If the students came to school without breakfast or if they had to get up early to ride the bus, the milk break helped until lunchtime.

Reading was the most important subject we taught. It was the belief of the district and the state that if you could read, you could master many other subject areas, such as science, social studies (we called it geography), and health.

Reading was taught in groups. They were leveled and named according to a theme; for example, if we had bird groups, one group would be bluebirds, another redbirds, and yet another robins. The groups had about six students in each of them, except the

lowest group, which would have only three or four. Each group spent about 20 to 30 minutes at the reading table with the teacher in the morning. At the morning reading groups, we studied from the basal reader with much practice and drill on the vowel sounds and sounding out words. We also worked on comprehension orally by discussing the stories and answering the questions in the teacher's guide after completion of reading the story. The stories in the basal readers were usually long but interesting. All of the groups, except the two lowest ones, would read from the same reader but at a different pace. The best readers would complete the first semester book and get to go on to the second-semester reader. If both readers were completed before the year ended, that group would get to read an extra supplementary reader.

In the afternoon, the students had supplementary reading time with the same division as in the morning. The supplementary readers had shorter stories, and there was not as much drill on phonics rules and comprehension. The stories were read more for practice and pleasure.

While the reading groups were in session, the other students worked on their seat work, which had been explained at the beginning of the day. Seat work in the morning consisted of language, which we then called English, reading work sheets, and spelling sentences or words. In the afternoon when the groups were having reading groups, the other students also did seat work, usually in math. Math was the subject taught immediately after lunch.

One of the important times of the day was about 15 minutes after lunch, when the teacher read from a chapter book which was continued day after day until the entire book was finished. Some of the favorite books were: The Littles, Charlotte's Web, and Lassie.

We had social studies (geography), science, or health after afternoon recess. We also had art and music on alternating days. Much of the art was built around units we were studying such as the community in which we lived, the seasons, or the holidays.

Most of the assignments were copied from the book or the chalkboard. We ran off very few papers. We did not have Xerox machines then. but

had mimeograph machines with purple print. The stencils were very messy and rubbed off on one's hands and clothes, especially if duplicating fluid was spilled on the machine. The teachers made their own stencils either by hand or by typing their own stencils. They also had the joy of running off their own work after the students were dismissed. The teachers always stayed later than the students to prepare materials for the following day and to prepare their lesson plans as well as to have conferences with the students' parents.

William Walts, the principal, required that all teachers have two plays per year. Once a year each grade level performed for the PTA. When the students were having the PTA program, there were many parents and many cameras. The parents were very helpful in making costumes as well as decorating the stage for the plays.

When I began teaching, there were two classes per grade level. The school consisted of grades 1 through 6. Frances Golden was the secretary. Walts and Golden worked very well together. The faculty enjoyed working together. I came to know all of the students' parents and many grandparents and learned where the students' fathers worked and where each student lived. Most mothers did not work away from home when I began teaching. I was active in PTA, holding various PTA offices throughout the first 15 years of my career.

Walts allowed the parents to request the teacher of their choice for their children. Because of this privilege of the parents, I taught very few of the Methodist children while I was teaching the third grade, as Jo McFadin, the other third-grade teacher, went to Smithfield Methodist Church. Most of the people in the community of Smithfield, in the 1960s and 1970s, went to one of the three churches in the community, Methodist, Baptist, or Church of Christ.

There were many fun times at Smithfield Elementary. The students looked forward to the Halloween carnival (the annual fund-raiser). The parents began planning the carnival weeks ahead of time. They spent the largest portion of the proceeds on things the teachers needed. The PTA at Smithfield Elementary was very involved with the students and teachers. Each year during National School Week, the PTA presented the teachers with a

special treat every day of the week. Some examples were: breakfast for the teachers and a luncheon for the teachers. This really was a treat; there were no duty-free lunches then. They not only gave us a lunch but provided someone to teach our classes, and oftentimes, they presented a program at that time for our entertainment. Some years they would bake each teacher a cake or give us a corsage or a candy jar. The teachers felt special during that week. The students looked forward to the holidays, as we would have a Christmas party, an Easter egg hunt, a Valentine's party, and an end-of-school party which usually was quite a celebration with races, hot dogs, and homemade ice cream.

Report cards were very simple in the early years of my career. Some years we used "S" for Satisfactory, "N" for Needs Improvement, and "U" for Unsatisfactory. When we used this scale, we did not have to average grades, because in our grade books we wrote "S," "N," or "U" when we graded papers to be sent home to the parents. Other grading systems we later used were: letter grades "A," "B," "C," "D," and "F" and number grades "A+" (95-99), "A-" (90-94), "B+" (85-89), "B" (80-84), "C+" (75-79), "C" (70-74), "D" (60-69), and "F" (anything below 60). "D" was a passing grade at that time.

Teachers were allowed to fail students with or without parental permission, at the beginning of my career. The teacher would have several conferences with the parents and would have them as early in the year as possible. We also encouraged the parents to help the child as much as possible at home. A rule was that if we wanted to retain a child, we should tell the parents by March. This would give both parents time to become adjusted to this suggestion before the final decision was made. It has been my experience that parents become very upset when the teacher initially suggests that their child be retained for the following year. Many times they become defensive when told the student is not passing to the next grade. They also feel responsible and feel that the child has failed in life or that they failed as parents. Oftentimes when faced with this dilemma, the parents would start saying, "I'll help him/her this summer;" "We'll hire a tutor;" or "We'll send our child to summer school."

A vivid memory of teaching at Smithfield School is the bus room. Elementary students got out at 3:00 p.m. The junior high and high school students were bused and did not get out until 3:30. The buses arrived at Smithfield around 4:00 p.m. Therefore, the Smithfield teachers rotated to watch the bus riders and any others who were not picked up from school. Some of the teachers brought their own children. These students also stayed in the bus room. They were dismissed to go to their mothers' rooms when the buses loaded. (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992)

Marvin Fuller was assigned as principal of Smithfield Elementary School in 1972 and continued until 1976. He had been employed with Birdville for 18 years and had been Vocational Counselor at Haltom High School and Richland High School and Academic Counselor at Haltom High School. He also had been a counselor at Haltom Junior High School and sixth-grade teacher at South Birdville Elementary School ("Marvin Fuller," July 1972).

Kindergarten: A New Era for Texas Public
Schools 1973

In the history of Smithfield, area churches provided a form of education for preschool children by having classes on Sunday to learn the Bible and also Vacation Bible School for two weeks in the summer (Smithfield Baptist Church History, 1992). The area churches also provided preschool education by establishing day-care programs and "mother's day out" programs. Smithfield Methodist began a formal

preschool program for one day a week in 1987. This program has grown in popularity and stability since its beginning. The preschool teaches 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds (S. Orr, personal communication, October 1992).

Also, in the same area where Zion Methodist Church began in the Turner's home is the College Hills Church of Christ, which has maintained Thursday School for 20 years. This school is for preschool children. The nearby Fort Worth Christian School has a day care and kindergarten which was established in the 1960s (L. Robinson, personal communication, May 1990).

Currently there are three day-care centers within walking distance from Smithfield Elementary School and another one two miles north. These centers provide care for children from birth to age 12, providing care before and after school for school-age children. One center, Pre School Enrichment, also has a private half-day kindergarten with the curriculum similar to the public school kindergarten (L. Sullivan, personal communication, June 1992).

The major influence impacting the need for these facilities was working mothers. The parents needed a convenient place that would care for their children as well as educate them. Also, there was a need during the child's elementary school years for transportation to school for

those students whose mothers worked (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

After 1960 many family farms were sold, and new homes were built in the Smithfield area. Many of these homes were sold to young couples with families. The homes were median-to upper-priced homes, and the couples could not afford them on one income. Therefore, many mothers went to work and created a need for day-care centers. No longer was the mother in the home to tend and teach the child. Public half-day kindergarten began in Smithfield in 1973, which created an even greater need for day-care centers. The parents needed a place near Smithfield Elementary to leave their children. The half-day kindergarten created a necessity for day-care personnel or babysitters to pick up and/or deliver the students at noon and after school (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

More and more parents began feeling that early childhood education was important, not just kindergarten at age 5 but also for preschool education. Some nonworking mothers also take their one-year-old children to one-day-a-week programs so their children will have the experience of working and playing with other children. This is especially true if there is only one child in the family (C. Gibson, personal communication, June 1992).

The Birdville School District first started thinking and talking about beginning kindergarten in the district in 1970, when the State of Texas made a ruling that all 5-year-olds should be provided with kindergarten classes by the fall of 1977. The program would be provided for all 5-year-olds; however, the program would not be compulsory to the students. The parents would have an option of whether their 5-year-old would attend kindergarten.

In the graduated program ordered by the State of Texas, kindergarten had to be provided by 1974 for the educationally handicapped students. By 1977 all 5-year-olds were eligible for kindergarten ("Trustees to Discuss First Public School kindergarten," 1970).

Birdville had 1 of 20 pilot kindergartens throughout Texas during the school year 1971-72. More than 300 people came to South Birdville Elementary School to view the program in 1971. Ann Sartain was the first kindergarten teacher in Birdville. The programs throughout the Birdville District were based on the model program which Sartain, kindergarten teacher at South Birdville, and Claudine Williams, elementary consultant, so proudly and skillfully developed ("South Birdville Model Program Pupil-pleaser," 1972).

All 5-year-olds in Birdville began kindergarten in 1973. The kindergarten at Smithfield Elementary began at

this time. This new program gave Birdville School District an additional 1350 students (C. Williams, personal communication, July 1992).

When kindergarten began in Birdville in 1973, the consultant, Williams, had studied at Texas Wesleyan College and had become certified to teach kindergarten. In Williams' classes she had learned about how a child learns through play and how kindergarten bridges the gap between home and the first grade. She learned that a child developed language through hearing childhood stories and being able to express oneself verbally and, also, through songs, nursery rhymes, and fingerplays.

When kindergarten first began at Smithfield, there was only one teacher with two sections, a morning and an afternoon class. Hazel Lowrance was the first kindergarten teacher at Smithfield Elementary. She went to school at North Texas State University in the summer of 1973 and received an endorsement to teach kindergarten. This was a new and exciting area for her, Smithfield Elementary, and the school district (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992). The school district had a bond election to build new kindergarten buildings ("Birdville Bond Issues to decide three issues," 1970). Elementary consultant Williams helped design the buildings and to develop the curriculum. The buildings were built separate from the other school

building. There were two oversized rooms in each building, and there were two rest rooms between the classrooms with an open hallway between the two classes. All furniture, tables, chairs, home center equipment, and even the commodes were child-sized. The school district spent approximately \$4,000 on equipping each room and allowed the teachers to replace items at the end of the year. Every teacher was allotted money for cooking expenses each year (C. Williams, personal communication, July 1992).

The students took many field trips with the mothers taking them in their cars; therefore, there was no reason to collect money to pay the bus driver or for buses. When pets were studied, a pet store was visited at the nearby mall. When farm animals were studied, they visited a feed store and bought chickens. The students fed and raised the chickens at school. The children saw them grow up. When they studied food groups, they went to the vegetable stand and purchased their own vegetables to make salads. They visited the zoo after they studied zoo animals. This continued to be the one field trip that the kindergarten still takes (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

When kindergarten first began at Smithfield, the students did not do paper and pencil activities. They concentrated on developing the fine motor skills, the large

motor skills, language development, developing a good self-image, and learning to get along in the world. To learn these things did not require that a child sit down and write the alphabet or sit down and add or subtract. To acquire the large motor skills, the students were allowed to go to an outdoor center which was located on the porch just outside the classroom door. This center changed frequently, as did the other centers. Sometimes the students played catch with a big red kickball; sometimes they had water play; and one of the favorite activities in this center was the building center. There were two little blue tables that were set outside the door. The students were allowed to saw and hammer to their hearts' content. They actually never built more than small boats or cars; however, many, many nails were driven. Perhaps one of these young students may now be in construction or household repair because of this activity. All of these activities were done in small groups to allow the students to develop socially by interacting verbally and sharing with each other (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

Another way the students were helped to develop their large muscles was by having unstructured playground time. To promote the development of the large muscles, they were provided with several large balls to catch and kick, a heavy-duty plastic hopscotch, ropes which were sometimes

used for horses, homemade stick horses, wagons, big wheels, pedal cars, and tricycles; the students also had access to the bars to climb on and cans to fill with sand (C. Williams, personal communication, July 1992).

Sometimes the students and teacher would go outside of the room, during class time, to play group games. One game the students loved was "Farmer in the Dell." They also had singing group games such as "Old Brass Wagon." These songs taught the students to move from the left to the right.

For tension release and for creative work, the students had ready access to the painting table. Here they could paint as many pictures as they wished, with whatever colors were out. They always had several colors after the first six weeks, as the child could not paint a really life-like picture with only one or two colors as the world is not made up of one or two colors (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

Along with the art table went the writing center with several types of materials. It was called the free art center. In this center the students could draw with markers, crayons, map colors, or colored chalk. They could cut and glue colored construction paper, cut white mimeograph paper for books, punch colored paper with the paper punch, trace stencils, illustrate their own books and decorate them with sewing scraps such as sequins, glitter,

rickrack, and sewing materials. These students were exposed to writing at a very early age. A favorite activity was to make books in the writing center (M. Pelto, personal communication, July 1992).

Also in the room, there was a home center. The theme in the home center was not changed according to what the class was studying but was left intact so that the student would be free to always play house rather than fireman, teacher, or other persons. Thereby, the student would become more creative and would act out what had happened in his or her life and what he or she had actually experienced. The home center was good play therapy, as re-living what one sees in everyday life is important to young children. Acting like someone else they knew or had seen in real life helped the child to sort out what was good or what was bad and what was acceptable and what was not. It was almost like thinking out loud (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

The large block center was one of the most popular centers, perhaps because it was not always open. The boys seemed to want to play there. They built houses and played house along with the students in the home center. Often the blocks were stacked and used for doors and windows, and furniture was sometimes made of them. Center time was a noisy, happy time in the room. It always came at the end of

the day, and the students did not want to quit to go home. The block center helped to develop the child socially, helped to build muscles in the arms and legs, and taught the child about constructing buildings.

The classroom was child-centered. When the PTA bought carpet for the kindergarten rooms, Angela Brown designed an area to be left with tile to be used for the sandbox and for the painting table (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

To develop the small muscles in the fingers, there were many activities which were fondly called shelf toys. Some of these activities were puzzles, dressing paper dolls, Tinker Toys, Legos, Teddy Bears, Bingo, sewing cards, Lincoln Logs, and the small solid wooden blocks which the students used to build various things--sometimes roads and sometimes buildings. The shelf toys were played with at center time.

To develop language the students did a lot of listening and responding. At the beginning of each day, the students gathered at the rug. Every day the students listened to one or more stories, sang songs, and did finger plays. Often the story would be concerning whatever they were studying in social studies. If the unit was about fire, they heard a story about a fireman or a fire dog. They may have learned a song about the fire truck, and the firemen might come to

visit them at school. The students wore fire hats when they sang the fire truck song. If they were studying about the fall season, they might hear the story about the puppies who grew all through the year and would learn a finger play about fall. The entire social studies curriculum was in thematic units. The students spent the first hour at the rug singing, hearing stories, studying social studies, and playing games such as Alphabet Bingo, Color and Shape Bingo, Number Bingo 1 to 20, and sometimes Beginning Consonant Bingo (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

The students heard stories about Clifford, the Big Red Dog, Curious George, ABC books, number books, fairy tales such as "Gingerbread Man," "The Three Bears," "The Three Little Pigs," and "Three Billy Goats Gruff" which were read by the teacher. Story and picture cards from Scott Foresman also were used. The pictures were large, and the stories were familiar which was helpful in developing language (M. Pelto, personal communication, July 1992).

Holidays were special in kindergarten. When a holiday was coming, that would be the unit that was studied. There was normally a culminating activity for every unit, especially for the holiday units. Halloween was culminated by having a party and dressing up in Halloween costumes. The students played trick or treat in the room, with each child bringing one large bag of unopened candy to share with

the other trick or treaters (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

For Thanksgiving there was an annual feast, served from the school cafeteria, of turkey, dressing, and pumpkin pie. The students dressed in costumes as either a pilgrim or an Indian. They strung their own beads for the Indians. The song they learned and sang on this day was, "Over the River and Through the Woods." The children decorated the tables with orange paper and made their own paper place mats. The parents were invited to visit the classroom to help celebrate Thanksgiving. Gussie Nickerson, the school housekeeper for 20 years, brought the feast and helped the teacher serve the food to the students (J. Johnson, personal communication, August 1992).

In October the students began learning "The Night Before Christmas." They studied only one new page per day. By Christmas the entire class could say the whole poem. The class always had a Christmas party. The children brought gifts to exchange by drawing a number. The girls brought a girl's gift, and the boys brought a boy's gift. Santa Claus came before the party started and brought all of the students a candy cane (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

There was a Valentine's party in February. The students put not only the friend's name, but also a number,

on the cards. A paper was sent home with each child's name and number on it. The child's Valentine sack corresponded to the number on the list (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

The students also had an Easter egg hunt and party. They liked coloring the eggs and bringing their own baskets and eggs from home. There were three prizes: one for the student who found the most, one for the student who found the least, and one for the student who found the prize egg. The prizes were usually box puzzles. In 1976 the prize egg was an American flag decorated in red, white, and blue. The students studied about our nation and learned patriotic songs that year (S. Cowart, personal communication, August 1992).

The kindergarten students were allowed to bring snacks for their birthdays. Not all children brought snacks on their birthdays; however, the class always sang "Happy Birthday" to each child on her/his special day, and this child was the class helper for the day. The parents also were asked to visit the classroom on the child's birthday.

In November, when the circus came to Fort Worth, the kindergarten class studied about the circus and had their own circus in the classroom. The students practiced for about two weeks before inviting the parents. They dressed in costumes the day the parents came. Many of the parents

helped provide the costumes (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

In January, when the rodeo came to Fort Worth, the class had a unit on cowboys. They cooked "Cowboy Chili," ate and drank from tin cans, sang songs about cowboys, and invited the parents to visit the classroom.

The last party of the year was the end-of-school party. It was held outside, and there were relay races and games like a sports day. The mothers brought hot dogs, cokes, and homemade ice cream. Every child won a prize during the relays (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

The parents came to the room often, sometimes to visit, sometimes to help. Parent volunteers also came on a regular basis. They helped the students with their work and read stories to them (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

Charlotte Cooke Williams (personal communication, October 1992) began teaching at Smithfield in 1973. She replaced Hazel Lowrance in the third grade when Lowrance began teaching kindergarten. Williams is still teaching the third grade in 1992-1993 at Smithfield Elementary School.

The trend in teaching in 1973 was to follow the instruction manual very closely. It was unthinkable not to complete the book for each subject. We were phonics-oriented in reading. Comprehension was not stressed, but children could pronounce words with many syllables because of their phonetic skills. There were

not many teaching aids other than teaching charts and word cards. We leveled according to ability in both reading and math. The students changed classes for these subjects.

As the years passed, we came to realize comprehension actually was as important as phonics, so we began requiring more essay-type answers to questions. Very few of these required higher-level thinking skills, unfortunately. Most answers involved specific details rather than comparing, contrasting, and so forth.

Now we have become more concerned with children creating their own compositions, expressing themselves in writing, and making choices in reading selections. Very few skills are emphasized. It takes a great deal of planning on the part of the teacher to ensure that reading skills are included.

There is much more higher-level thinking done in this type of classroom. Group activities as well as peer sharing are quite prevalent. This flexible, unstructured atmosphere creates a more enjoyable environment for learning. It is a far cry from the days of sitting in rows and never sharing your answers with anyone. Teaching now includes computers, video tapes, and many hands-on manipulatives.

One of the most memorable events was when we spent half a day in the all during a tornado alert. This was the day the devastating tornado hit Wichita Falls.

Another unforgettable day was when I drove up to the school to see many fire trucks surrounding it. There had been a fire when a teacher left books on a heater that came on during the night. Rather than dismiss school, we all spent the day in the gym.

When my son, Pat, was in Peggy Harvey's class (fifth grade), they all went out to watch a calf being born in the pasture next to the playground (talk about real-live science)!

One of my scariest moments was when a child ran away from the school as I took him to the office to be disciplined. He ran home, and his mother brought him back and made him apologize (smart mother). The 30 minutes he was gone were an eternity.

Another experience I recall was a father coming to school intoxicated. He ranted and raved at the principal and me because I made his child sit on the sidewalk during recess. (C. C. Williams, personal communication, October 1992)

The Rapid Growth of a Rural Area

1974-1993

Ruth Coppock (personal communication, September 1992) became principal of Smithfield Elementary School in September, 1976, and continued until 1979. She replaced Marvin Fuller, who was reassigned to Birdville Elementary.

Coppock had been with Birdville for 25 years. She had served for 10 years as assistant principal at North Oaks Junior High.

She also served seven years as counselor at Haltom Junior High, taught history for five years at Haltom Junior High, and began her teaching career as a second-grade teacher at the old Central campus and one year at South Birdville Elementary.

Mrs. Coppock received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees at Texas Wesleyan College. Also, she has certificates in Professional Life in Elementary, High School, Counseling, Superintendent, Principal, and Administration. ("School Welcomes Principal," 1976)

Coppock mostly remembered the growth of Smithfield Elementary. When she came to Smithfield in September 1976, it was a small rural school. The student body was about 350. There were empty rooms in the building and there was lots of room. People were moving into the area and many new

homes were being built. When she left in 1979, the school population had doubled and every room was full. The reading class was meeting in an off set in the hall that had been converted into a classroom. Those years were when the town was going from rural to city. There was a farm across the street from the school. She remembered such good garden-fresh vegetables! Now, there is a new street there with houses on each side of the street (R. Coppock, personal communication, September 1992).

"The people in the community were interested in their school and helped in every way to make it an outstanding school." When Coppock was there, the entire building received carpeting. She felt this was an outstanding accomplishment. The Smithfield PTA helped to buy the carpet by having fund raisers such as the carnival and candy sales (R. Coppock, personal communication, September 1992).

Joe Max Wilson became the principal of Smithfield Elementary School in 1979. He continued until he was re-assigned to Holiday Heights in 1987. Maxie Mullins was an intern serving as assistant principal at Smithfield Elementary School for the years 1985 to 1987 (L. K. B. Alread, personal communication, September 1992).

Linda Kay Brown Alread was secretary of Smithfield Elementary School from 1979 to 1987.

I worked in part of the same building that I studied and learned in as a child. It was wonderful working at the same school as I had grown up in and that all my family had gone thorough. Smithfield is a lot different now than it was a long time ago, but it will always remain dear to me. (L. K. B. Alread, personal communication, September 1992)

Billy H. Smith, Richland High School Principal, was appointed to the position of Assistant Superintendent of Birdville Public Schools in 1971. Smith served as general assistant to W. G. Thomas. He joined the Birdville system in 1950 as a speech teacher at Birdville High School and later served at Snow Heights Elementary School and Haltom Junior High School before taking the principalship at Richland High when it was built in 1961 ("Birdville School Position is filled," 1971).

Smith became Superintendent of Birdville Schools in 1979 when W. G. Thomas retired. He held this position until retirement, and Joe Bill Fox was hired as superintendent (S. Martin, personal communication, February 1993).

In August 1981, work on the 1.1 million dollar expansion and renovation of Smithfield Elementary School was almost 70% complete. The expansion for the school included 10 new classrooms, a new library and offices, renovation of the kitchen, and a facelift for the oldest part of the building ("Smithfield School Remodels," 1981).

In addition, the school's main entrance was changed from the west to the north side, which allowed for easy loading and unloading of students. Original plans for open classrooms were changed to allow only two classrooms incorporating folding partitions (L. Sullivan, personal communication, June 1992).

The new classrooms provided space for 139 additional students. At the beginning of the year, the school had 892 children, compared to 753 in 1979.

"Old timers in the area had a difficult time believing this was part of the same school originally constructed in 1912. The district tried extensively to give the building a sense of continuity," said Billy Smith ("Smithfield School Remodels," 1981).

Smithfield Elementary held an open house from 2:00 to 4:00 on Sunday, April 26, 1981, for all in the community. Guests toured the new wing, including 10 new classrooms, new office complex and library, and renovation of the main building. A collection of pictures of the school were on display, with some pictures dating back to the late 1800s ("Smithfield Elementary Holds Open House," 1981).

Nineteen students from the Texas History Lamp Class (Learning Activities for Mental Proficiency, a program for gifted and talented students in the Birdville School District), Smithfield Junior High, wanted to make sure that Eli Smith will not be forgotten. They worked on a project to get a Texas State Historical Marker

which was placed at his grave on May 4, 1984, at Smithfield Cemetery.

Mike Patterson, the students' teacher and a well-known local historian, directed the project. He said that Eli Smith had some living descendants in Texas but none in Tarrant County. The program for presentation of the marker began in the Smithfield Methodist Church. Master of Ceremonies, Willard Scott, recognized descendants of those buried in Smithfield Cemetery. Mike Patterson, with the Tarrant County Historical Commission, gave the history of the cemetery. A procession then went across the street to the cemetery, where the marker was dedicated. The marker was erected by Eli Smith's grave. ("Students Seeking Historical Marker," 1984)

April 30, 1983

Over 150 adults ate in the cafeteria for Grandparents Day. Over the years Grandparents Day has become a day which students and grandparents look forward to. Grandparents are invited to visit the students' classrooms after lunch. (Smithfield School Parents Letter, PTA Historian's Book, April 1983)

A preschool roundup of children who were five on or before September 1, 1981, was held at Smithfield Elementary. The kindergarten teachers, Angela Brown and Hazel Lowrance, principal Joe Max Wilson, secretary Bobette Schooler, and Margaret Latham, PTA president, met with parents and preschoolers.

A slide presentation about kindergarten was shown in the library. The children visited the classrooms with the teachers, while parents stayed for talks with the principal, secretary, and PTA president.

The future kindergarten children heard stories, sang songs, and enjoyed refreshments in the rooms and then met

back in the library with the parents ("Smithfield plans pre-school event," 1981).

Joe Bill Fox became the Superintendent of Birdville Independent School District in 1984. Fox joined the Birdville district in 1956 as a coach and a teacher. He left in 1960 and held coaching positions in Abilene, San Antonio, and Irving before rejoining Birdville in 1980 as athletic director. He became deputy superintendent in 1981 and superintendent three years later ("Fox evokes strong reaction," 1989).

Wanda Strong (personal communication, October 1992) became principal of Smithfield Elementary in 1987 and continued until 1989. She replaced Wilson. Her profession began in Birdville in 1965 as the Business teacher at Haltom High School. She also was assistant principal at Haltom Junior High, Watauga Junior High, and Smithfield Junior High before coming to Smithfield Elementary. After leaving Smithfield, she became principal at North Oaks Middle School.

Strong began her education in the Birdville Public Schools. She graduated from Birdville High School in 1954. She has a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in secondary education from Texas Wesleyan, a Master of Education degree in school supervision from North Texas State University, and an all-level Administrator's

Certificate from North Texas State University (W. Strong, personal communication, October 1992).

Strong was one of the first female assistant principals appointed in the Birdville school system. She realized that excellence in education could only be achieved through partnerships with community leaders and civic organizations. Therefore, she became very involved in local politics. She was chairperson of Project Pride of Northeast Tarrant County Chamber of Commerce, which promotes beautification of Northeast communities, and served as the chairperson of the committee that created "Birdville Birdie" as a mascot to visit elementary schools to promote clean-up campaigns on school campuses (W. Strong, personal communication, October 1992). John Fanning was an intern for assistant principal at Smithfield Elementary School from 1987 to 1989. Strong and Fanning both transferred to North Oaks Middle School as principal and assistant principal in August 1989 (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992).

In 1989, Fox was making \$84,458 and was overseeing a \$55 million annual budget and about 1,800 employees. The district had 17,500 students and served Haltom City, North Richland Hills (with included Smithfield), Richland Hills, Watauga, and part of Hurst ("Fox evokes strong reaction," 1989).

In 1989, Jolene Armstrong became principal at Smithfield Elementary School. Carol Risick became the intern for assistant principal. Currently in 1992-1993, they both serve these same positions (L. Sullivan, personal communication, February 1993).

Upon his retirement in 1992, Fox was making \$104,000 yearly (S. Martin, personal communication, February 1992). There were 2 years left on his contract as superintendent. The school district paid him for the remaining 2 years ("Joe Bill Fox," 1992).

Currently in 1992-93, there are five sections of half-day kindergarten at Smithfield Elementary (L. Sullivan, personal communication, June 1992). The kindergartens all have self-contained classes with the classroom teacher being the main teacher. There are special music teachers and librarians who teach the kindergarten children music and library one day per week for 30 minutes for each subject. There is a computer assistant in the Writing to Read computer lab to assist the students. The kindergarten students work in the computer lab one hour each day during the second semester of kindergarten.

The kindergarten classes at Smithfield are three-hour sessions, which are mandated by the state. The ratio is 22 to 1. Each kindergarten session has a physical education

period. They no longer have snacks (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

The present-day kindergartners in Smithfield Elementary School are taught at circle time in units of study. The teachers also integrate the units of studies with the centers and the table work. For example, if the unit is on bears, the teacher most likely will decorate the room with stuffed bears, bear pictures, bear cans, and many added touches about bears. The teacher might make bear games for numbers and the alphabet. The art work could consist of dressing a paper bear with real material clothes. They might study the letter "b" for bear as well as make a brown bear from brown coffee grounds glued on a brown construction bear, then trimmed with beads or bows for the letter "b."

The units of study begin early in the school year and continue throughout the entire school year. The children are exposed to field trips and resource people relating to the unit whenever possible (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

Some of the units of study are listed below: nursery rhymes, colors, shapes, community helpers, fire prevention, safety, fall, Halloween, circus, Thanksgiving, the five senses, Christmas, winter, the stock show and rodeo, the farm, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Abraham Lincoln, dental health, George Washington, Texas, Saint Patrick's

Day, spring, rhyming words, the zoo, nutrition, Easter, all about themselves, and transportation (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

The kindergartners at Smithfield Elementary also are using the Writing to Read computer program; however, the teachers are not well pleased with the program. The kindergartners, therefore, have gone from one full year using computers to only the second semester of the kindergarten year. The Smithfield kindergarten teachers feel that the time would be better spent to provide more language development activities (D. Quinton, personal communication, October 1992).

The letters of the alphabet and the corresponding sounds are taught throughout the year. The teachers present one alphabet letter per week with various activities and games related to that particular letter (D. Quinton, personal communication, October 1992).

Math also is a subject which is important in the kindergarten program. The students are expected to be able to count to 100 by the end of the school year. They also are exposed to number words one through ten, and are introduced to simple addition and subtraction. They are taught to recognize the various coins and very simple counting of money and various shapes. The students study

the calendar each day (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

The students are expected to learn the basic shapes and colors as well as to recognize the color words. The students are introduced to rhyming words and are expected to learn many of them orally and several by recognizing the written words. Opposite words also are taught as well as to print the upper and lower case alphabet. The students are exposed to the written form of the holidays, months of the year, and days of the week (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992).

In 1992 the elementary curriculum has changed in many respects, and yet in other ways, it is basically the same as in the 1800s. One difference is how and when it is taught. The beginning reading skills now are taught in kindergarten instead of in first grade. In 1992, in kindergarten reading is taught by beginning with the alphabet. In the lower grades, phonics are taught and students can break down a word and sound it out. The same is true in math. In 1950 the schedule showed that first graders were taught numbers. Presently, kindergartners are taught numbers and simple addition and subtraction. Some things, that originally were taught in the first grade, now are taught in kindergarten (A. Brown, personal communication, June 1992). Part of this is due mainly to the communication young children have with

the outside world because of television and radio. Young children have more social exposure due to living in a heavily populated area, thereby having other young children with whom to play. In the early years of this state, young children who lived on farms had only brothers and sisters with whom to play. Another factor for improved early education is the educational toys to which many middle-class children have access. Technology is very much improved and advanced and has lowered the cost of many things which promote education, such as computers and audio-visual equipment such as tape recorders, record players, and VCRs. Oftentimes, before a child goes to kindergarten, he or she is already familiar with tape recorders and computers as many families now have these items in the home (D. Quinton, personal communication, October 1992).

"The basic subjects are still taught in the elementary grades. However, we teach with a different approach" (L. Sullivan, personal communication, June 1992). There are more specialized teachers in the elementary schools than in earlier years. Some of these teachers are music, physical education, Reading Recovery for first graders who need extra help in reading, BRAVO for second through fifth graders who need extra help in reading, speech teachers, and special education teachers who teach students who have learning disabilities. There also are special teachers for students

with emotional disturbances (L. Sullivan, personal communication, June 1992).

The elementary curriculum has changed in the past 15 years from a teacher-directed curriculum to a self-directed curriculum. In the 1970s and 1980s, the teacher stood in front of the students and taught an isolated skill from a contrived story. Stories used were not theme-related. There was much rote and memorization. Each subject was taught in isolation with little or no correlation. Writing was handwriting only, without regard to writing ability. Literature was an occasional chapter book read aloud to children. Students were put in reading groups by ability. Thematic units, with skills relating to literature, were not used. (M. Anderson, personal communication, September 1992)

Elementary school classes went from self-contained classes with heterogeneous groups in the early days of public schools to homogeneous grouping, or leveling, in the sixties, seventies, and eighties for the language arts and sometimes grouping for math. Now in the 1990s, classes have gone back to heterogeneous groups. Research studies have revealed learning styles more clearly, thus enabling teachers to be more prescriptive in their plans to meet individual needs (J. Slaughter, personal communication, November 1992).

Because of needs that have been identified by the work force, teachers now spend more time teaching the students to recognize problems, work cooperatively in groups to solve or point out a solution, and to be able to effectively communicate those solutions to others. The amount of time

spent teaching strategies almost equals the time spent teaching skills (C. C. Williams, personal communication, October 1992).

In the past two decades, there has been a breakdown in the home life structure. The children have less contact with the family members such as parents, brothers, and sisters. There also are fewer extended family members in contact with the child. Children now live farther away from grandparents. There also are more working parents and grandparents than ever. Children are staying alone more, and many are going to babysitters or day-care centers. Therefore, teachers are having to teach more values and make extra efforts to boost a child's morale and self-esteem. Teachers also strive to help the students form good habits or change undesirable habits (R. Denk, personal communication, September 1992).

The approach to reading is no longer the phonetic approach, which means sounding out letters and breaking down words into syllables. There is more emphasis on writing now than ever. Many teachers allow students to use inventive spelling, which means the word is written as the student hears it and the teacher does not correct the spelling (J. Slaughter, personal communication, November 1992).

The elementary schools are now using a concept called whole language to teach the language arts subjects such as

language, spelling, and reading. The subjects are integrated throughout the curriculum and are taught through units of study. The basal readers and spelling lists have been discontinued in many of the Birdville schools. The teachers now use chapter books and trade books to teach the concepts that were formerly taught through much practice and drill. The basic subjects, reading, spelling, and language, still are taught; however, they are taught by different methods. Reciting and drilling on words and facts are not as important to teachers as they once were.

The teachers are exposing the students to more writing activities, as it has been brought to the attention of the public that many students who graduate from high school are poor writers (C. C. Williams, personal communication, October 1992).

The State of Texas has mandated many special program to meet the needs of each individual child. There now are occupational and physical therapists, speech teachers, English-as-a-second-language teachers, bilingual teachers, and Reading Recovery teachers for children in the first grade who are below grade level; BRAVO teachers for dyslexic children; and Excel teachers for the academically advanced students. There also are four-year-old programs for those students who are economically deprived or whose home language is non-English. All of the Smithfield students are

allowed to go to the computer labs weekly, to music, library, and physical education with special teachers for each of these subjects. There are resource and content-mastery classes for many students who have learning disabilities. The Smithfield students also have access to the EXCEL program for academically advanced students and the BRAVO reading program for dyslexic students and others with reading disabilities. Students with other academic needs such as English as a second language (ESL), bilingual, or deaf students are bused to nearby Birdville schools that have the correct program to assist the child with his or her own particular needs (J. Armstrong, personal communication, June 1993).

In the year 1991-1992, the students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 11 were given the NAPT Test in April. NAPT stands for Norm Referenced Assessment of Academic Skills which is a comparison of these students to the other students in Texas.

In 1992-1993 the third-, seventh-, and eleventh-grade students were given the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills Test (TAAS) in the first semester of 1992. In the spring, the fourth- and eighth-grade classes also will take the test as will the tenth grade. It is a criterion-referenced test which judges how well the students know the materials they are expected to know. The students are not being compared against other students.

Each spring all of the kindergarten students in the Birdville Independent School District are given the Cogat Test to test cognitive abilities. This test is given to determine whether the student qualifies for the Excel program for gifted students.

The eleventh-grade students are given the ExCET Test and must pass the test in order to graduate from high school. However, if they do not pass, they will be allowed to take the test again (S. Greer, personal communication, October 1992).

Jolene Armstrong (personal communication, June 1993) reported that in 1989, when she became principal at Smithfield Elementary, most of the grade levels were still ability grouping the students. A few of the teachers were beginning to present a whole language approach to the language arts curriculum, and a few were beginning to use manipulatives in mathematics. Gradually, the move away from ability grouping and toward an integrated language arts approach has been accomplished.

More than one-third of the teachers have completed training in the New Jersey Writing Project of Texas and have implemented process writing into their writing program. The two computer laboratories are instrumental in helping students have a desire to write.

The second- through fifth-grade students have computer times in the IBM compatible laboratory. A popular software with both students and teachers is the Children's Writing and Publishing program. The laboratory also is used for TAAS improvement and math improvement. The school year 1993-1994 the students will use a MacIntosh laboratory with 25 computers instead of the current 16 (J. Armstrong, personal communication, June 1993).

Summary

The community of Zion began sometime during the 1840s or 1850s. The Zion Community School was established in or before 1867, as this is the first written record of the school (Daily Fort Worth Standard, 1877). The residents of Zion were interested in their children's obtaining an education, as shown by the founding of the school, by the community residents' voting for school taxes in 1893 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, 1893), and also by the Zion Methodist Church's allowing the school to hold classes in the church building from 1876 to 1880 (Holden, 1931). Records show that the school district owned a wooden building and desks as far back as 1897 (Commissioners' Minutes Book 7, 1897).

Since the beginning of the Zion community, it has been a farming and agricultural community with cotton,

vegetables, fruit, and cattle. It was near Birdville, the county seat, which made getting the goods to market quicker than in later years when the county seat and the businesses were moved to Fort Worth (Ray, 1965).

In the 1850s, the Turner family had church services in their home (C. E. Turner, personal communication, September 1992). This was the beginning of the present-day Smithfield Methodist Church (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, October 1992). Later, two more churches, Smithfield Baptist and Smithfield Church of Christ, were established (B. A. Montgomery, personal communication, May 1, 1992). Throughout the years, Smithfield School and these three churches have remained in the community, and all presently are being used for the same function as that for which they were established (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, June 1993).

The community became a town called Zion in 1871, when it incorporated (Hallam, 1971). E. Smith and his wife, S. Smith, gave land to build the Methodist church and also to establish a cemetery (Hallman, 1979). In 1881, when the town wanted a post office, the name was changed from Zion to Smithfield, as there was already a Zion, Texas (Hallman, 1979). The people of the town voted to name the town in honor of E. Smith and his wife, S. Smith, for their contribution of land (Cobb, 1976).

In 1903, the community built the first brick school building (Treasurer's Report, 4-23/217), which stood until 1958 (PTA Yearbook, 1958). The present elementary school in the community is at the same location. The cafeteria was built in 1958, where the first brick school building stood (H. Lowrance, personal recollection, 1993). The school has been known throughout the area for its strong curriculum and highly qualified and dedicated teachers. It has been said that some people bought land in Smithfield, Texas, so that their children might go to Smithfield School (C. Autrey, personal communication, May 1993).

In 1958, the town of Smithfield, Texas, voted to annex with the newly developed town called North Richland Hills. The residents also voted the same year to consolidate with the neighboring school district, Birdville Independent School District (Hallman, 1971). The Smithfield School then became Smithfield Elementary and continues to be so as of 1993 (H. Lowrance, personal recollection, June 1993).

In 1981, the school district remodeled the existing school building and made an addition to the parts built in 1953 and 1958. The location of the offices was changed from the west side, which was located on Smithfield Road, to the north side, with a circle drive for safer access to the building ("Smithfield School remodels," 1981). In 1958, there were only six classrooms and a small office complex

(W. E. Walts, personal communication, October 1992). Currently, 1993, there are 30 classrooms with 6 additional classrooms in portable buildings (J. Armstrong, personal communication, June 1993). In 1867, there were 54 scholastics with one teacher (Daily Fort Worth Standard, 1877), while in 1993 there were 685 scholastics with 36 teachers (S. Ashburn, personal communication, April 1993).

The curriculum has changed in some respects, and in some respects it continues to be the same, such as the basic subjects of reading, spelling, and math. Currently, in 1993, the teachers use a whole-language approach to the language arts curriculum and use manipulatives in mathematics (C. C. Williams, personal communication, June 1993).

The IBM Write to Read lab for kindergartners opened in 1989. Presently, the first-grade students go to the Write to Read lab the first semester, and kindergarten students go into the lab the second semester. The first-grade students also have access to the IBM-compatible lab during the second semester (J. Armstrong, personal communication, June 1993).

The second- through fifth-grade students spend time in the computer lab daily. A popular software with both students and teachers is the Children's Writing and Publishing Program. The lab also is used for Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) improvement and math

improvement (J. Armstrong, personal communication, June 1993).

The community has changed from a rural farming community with dirt roads in the late 1800s, to gravel roads in the 1940s and 1950s, to a busy, bustling, crowded area with no farm land but paved streets, one major boulevard, and many, many beautiful medium- to upper-priced homes (L. T. Cantrell, personal communication, June 1993). The community still retains a rural atmosphere, as there are a few families who still own small plots which are used for gardening or an occasional cow, chicken, or horse. Recently, new, expensive homes have been built nearby the small, comfortable homes which were built in the 1940s and 1950s, when the town was Smithfield, Texas (H. Lowrance, personal recollections, June 1993).