

1922: *Sanborn Insurance maps of Dallas, Texas; Volume 5, sheet 579* (fragment from)
 The "Cedar Lawn" name used here is incorrect; Cedar Valley Public School never went by that name.

Cedar Valley School

The earliest mention of *Cedar Valley School* in the *Dallas Morning News* was in year 1902, when a Baptist mission was held in the school building.² The 1 acre site of the school had been purchased from the Coombes family by James D. Griffin, a lumberman, in 1886.³ Griffin then sold it to John D. Cole in 1893.⁴ I can find no deed of Cole ever selling this acre. The date when the first school building was built on this 1 acre site is unknown, but we can safely say it was there by year 1900, when it appears on *Sam Street's Map of Dallas County*.

In 1905 the student enrollment at the Cedar Valley school was "184 White and no colored".⁵ The great flood of the Trinity River damaged the facility in May of 1908. It was repaired, repainted, and its furniture re-varnished in August before the new school term started.⁶ In 1908 the "school census" for *Cedar Valley* had been 216; in 1909, after the great flood, it was 138.⁷ On the 11th of September 1911 the *Cedar Valley School*, a wood frame building 50 x 75 feet in size, burned down, a fire "believed to have been of incendiary origin" (arson).⁸

Cedar Valley School was a "common school district" in the Dallas County public education system, rather than a part of the West Dallas "independent school district", which had incorporated in 1893. However in 1916 *West Dallas Independent School District* annexed the territory of *Cedar Valley School* and took over its operation. The first four grades, possibly a fifth grade level, would be taught at *Cedar Valley School*, it was announced in 1924 before classes started on September 15th.⁹

In July of 1927, the *Dallas Independent School District* annexed *West Dallas Independent School District*, with *DISD* announcing that it would rebuild *Cedar Valley School*, which had burned down—again -- several months earlier.¹⁰



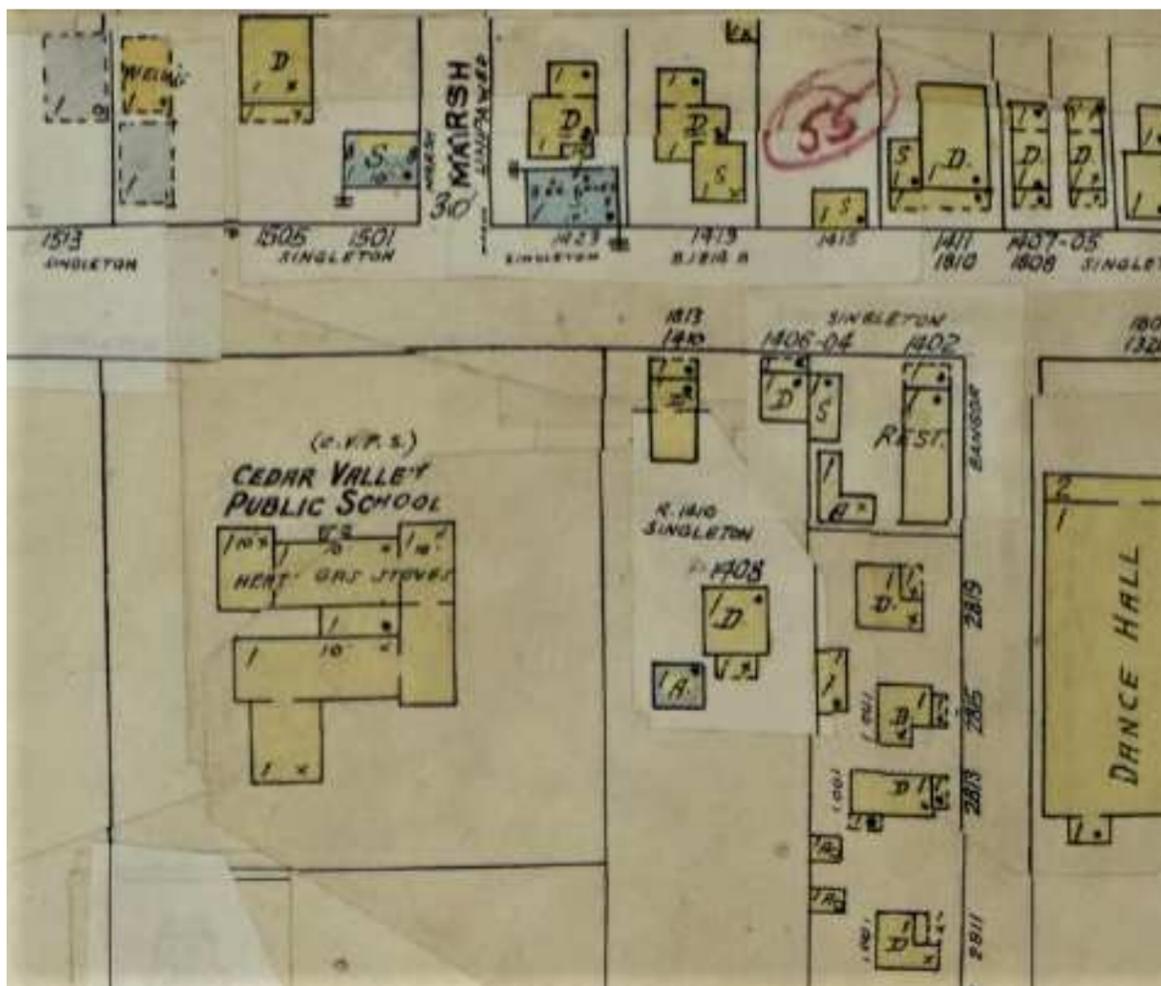
1930: *Fairchild Aerial photo survey of Dallas County, Texas* (detail from)
 Indistinct image of the Cedar Valley School building, standing along the south side of Eagle Ford Road
Foscue Map Collection, SMU Libraries, from internet webpage (2026)

Benito Juarez Elementary School

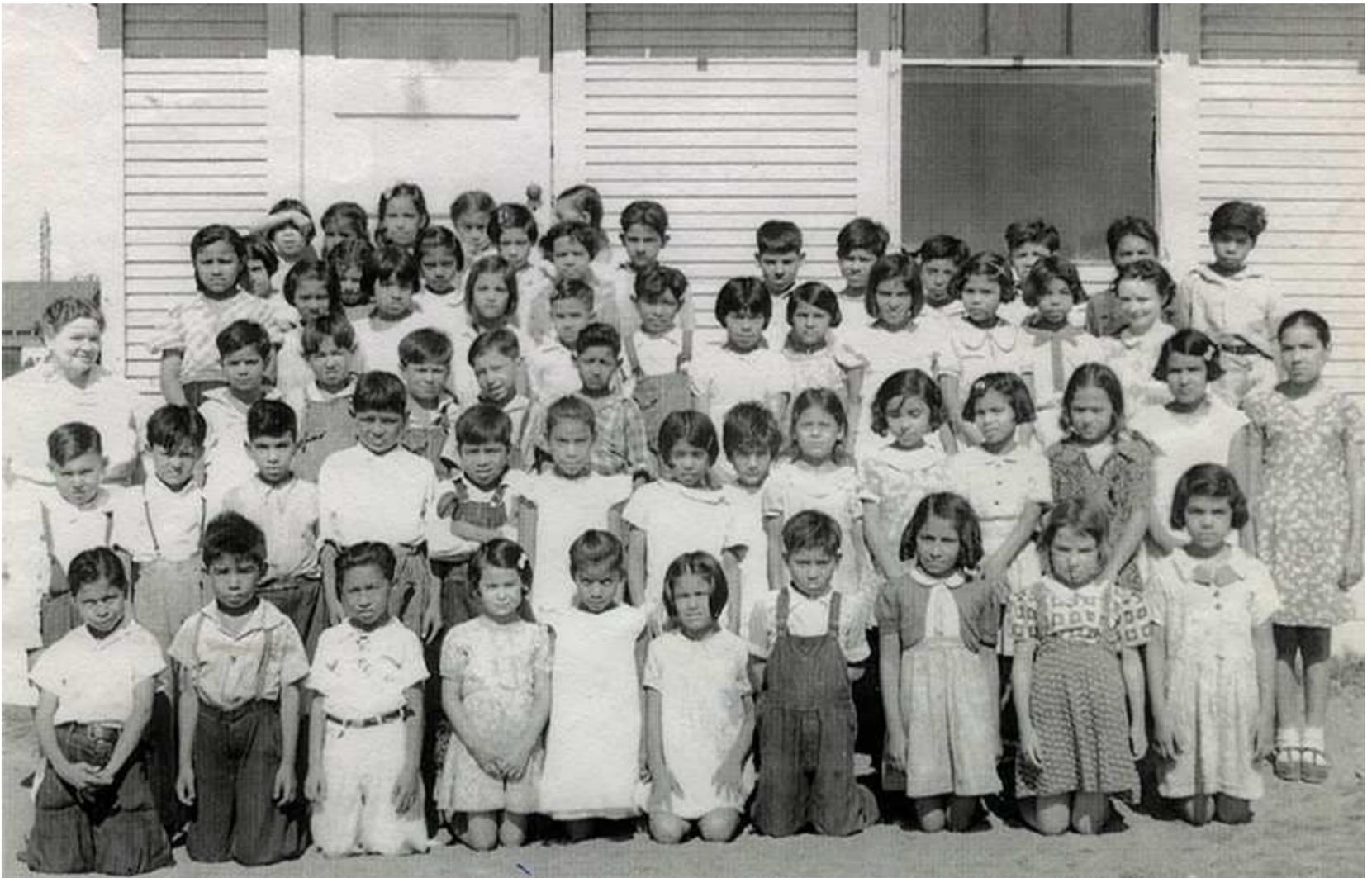
First mention of a *Benito Juarez Elementary School* in *The Dallas Morning News* appeared in December of 1928, when *Benito Juarez* reported the highest attendance rate of any school in the *Dallas Independent School District*.¹¹ Until 1934 *Benito Juarez* operated separately, at a totally different location from *Cedar Valley School*, a site along *Chihauahua Street* north of *Eagle Ford Road*¹² (outside the William Coombes Survey). In 1933 *Benito Juarez* had 38 students while *Cedar Valley* had 63.¹³ But the old floodplain's population was growing rapidly after completion of the new Trinity River levees. Many of the new residents were Hispanic.

In 1934 it was planned that all of the students of *Benito Juarez Elementary* were to be transferred to the old *Cedar Valley School* building, while all the students of *Cedar Valley* were to be relocated to *Sidney Lanier Elementary* and *Cement City School*. It's hard today to imagine Dallas so blatantly segregating "Mexican" from "White" students, but that was clearly the ethnic bias of that time. The students transferring out of *Benito Juarez* were supposed to retain the *Cedar Valley* name for their new school building.¹⁴ The plan to obliterate the *Benito Juarez* name never worked. Parents of White children at *Cedar Valley* unsuccessfully protested that in order to walk to *Sidney Lanier School* their young children would have to cross the dangerous Texas & Pacific Railroad tracks. A pedestrian tunnel under the railway would be provided County Commissioners said.¹⁵ The transfer between school buildings went into effect in 1937.¹⁶ Two years later Mrs. Anna Struck complained that the influx of former *Cedar Valley* students had overcrowded her neighborhood *Sidney Lanier Elementary School*.¹⁷ At this same time *Fred Douglass Elementary School* for colored children was located only about 3 blocks southeast of *Cedar Valley School*. Though these schoolhouses stood within short walking distances of each other, in the 1930s it was unacceptable for White, Mexican, and Negro students to share the same school facility.

As the school year started on the 14th of September of 1938 enrollment of Mexican students at the new *Benito Juarez School* (former *Cedar Valley*) jumped from 11 to 70 students.¹⁸ In order to serve the growing Hispanic population of this area, in 1941 construction started on the *St. Mary of Carmel* church at the southeast corner of Vilbig and Singleton. It's Roman Catholic parochial school opened there in 1944.¹⁹ As the area's Hispanic population grew, Dallas Independent School District continued to add onto *Benito Juarez Elementary*.

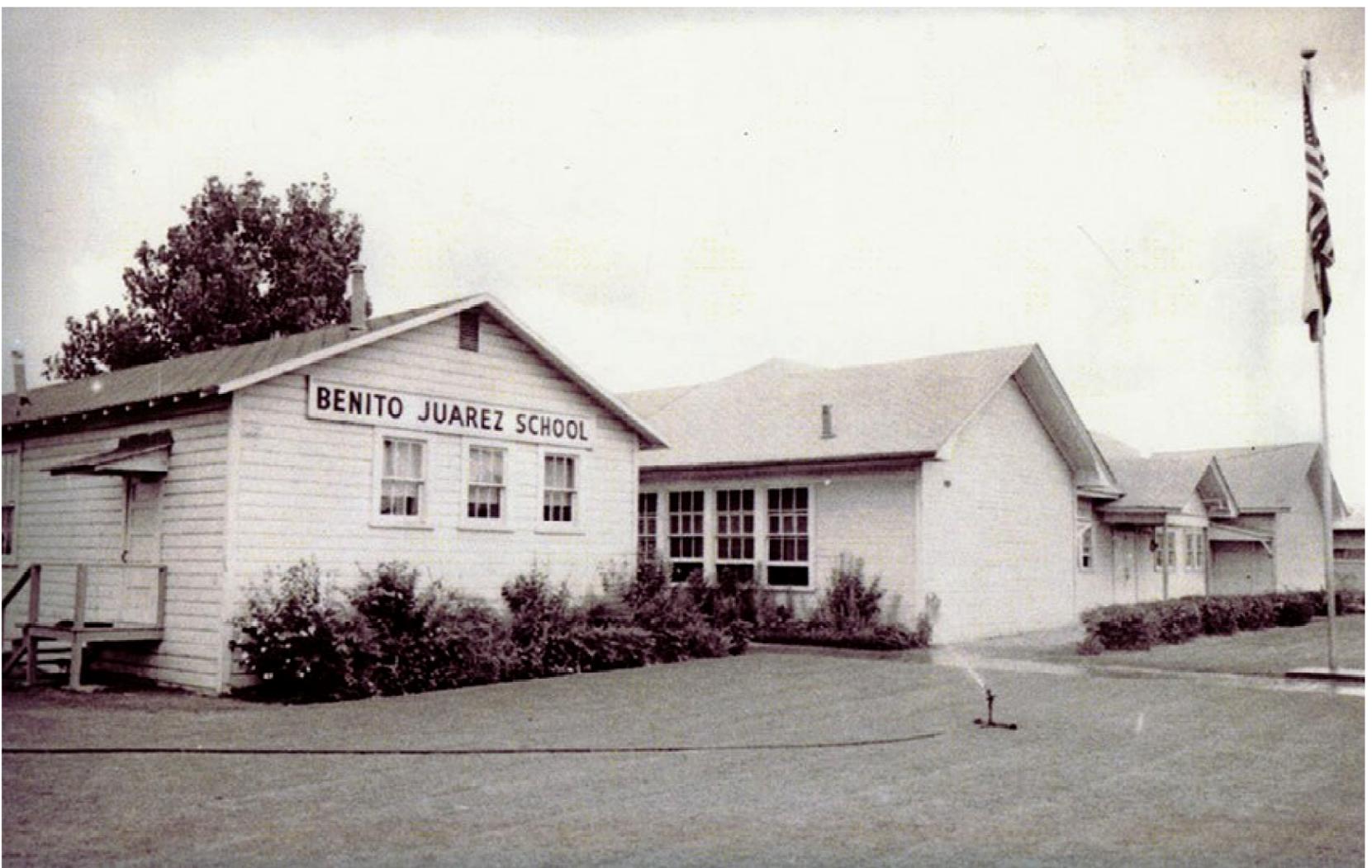


1950: Sanborn Insurance maps of Dallas, Texas; Volume 5, sheet 579 (fragment from). *Benito Juarez Elementary School* is still called; *Cedar Valley Public School* on this map.



Mrs. Robert's Class at Benito Juarez Elementary School, 1940

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Benito Juarez Elementary School

The Library's Archives list a date "c. 1925" for this photo, but the author of this article believes c. 1970 to be more nearly correct.
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End of the "separate but equal" doctrine of segregation was mandated by unanimous decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in May of 1954. Dallas started planning integration, but change was slow. In 1970 the Dallas Independent School district announced its plan to build a new *Lorenzo De Zavala Elementary*.²⁰



The projected enrollment would be "32 white, 164 black, and 283 Mexican-Americans". A lawsuit was filed complaining that this new *De Zavala School* would only perpetuate segregation. Dallas Independent School District countered that in order to receive federal funds for bi-lingual education the school had to have greater than fifty percent minority enrollment.²¹ Television news at the time described *Benito Juarez Elementary* as "the worst facility in the Dallas District", with "inadequate restrooms, no cafeteria, open gas heaters, and broken playground equipment."²² The neighborhood called it "the matchbox" because of its all wood construction.²³ In 1972 Federal Judge William M. Taylor Jr. of the Fifth Circuit Court in North Orleans ruled to permit the school district to proceed with construction of *Lorenzo De Zavala*.²⁴ It opened in 1980.²⁵ *Benito Juarez Elementary School* was then closed.

The Dallas Independent School District solicited bids for the empty *Benito Juarez* school property, but no one offered to buy it.²⁶ DISD decided to use the site as a maintenance facility, which it is today.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR SALE
Sealed bids for the sale of the Benito Juarez Elementary School Property will be taken by the Dallas Independent School District, and each such bid shall state the price which the bidder proposes to pay in cash, and each such bid shall be accompanied by a good-faith deposit of a cashier's check in the amount of 10% of the submitted bid, payable to the Dallas Independent School District and presented and filed with the Board of Education Secretary, 3700 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas, not later than 2:00 p.m., March 1, 1983. All such sealed bids shall be opened, tabulated, and read in public on March 1, 1983 at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Room at 3700 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas. No bid less than \$175,000 will be considered.
The property which is the subject matter herein is that which is known as the Benito Juarez Elementary School Property, situated in Dallas, Dallas County, Texas, and being located at 1500 Singleton Boulevard being a part of City Block 7255. The property being offered for sale is described as follows: Part of City Block 7255; 220.5' x 199' x 70' x 148.58' x 790' x 347.58'; 86,902 sq. ft. more or less, of land containing 13,500 sq. ft., more or less, of improvements; and identified locally as 1500 Singleton Boulevard. The Board of Education reserves the right to reject any or all bids. No bid will be considered which is not accompanied by the required earnest money cashier's check.

1983: Dallas Morning News advertisement
The site had grown to almost 2 acres and school buildings enclosing 13,500 sq. ft.²⁷



2026: 1500 Singleton Road, site of the former Cedar Valley Public School and then as Benito Juarez Elementary School, seen on the right, is still owned by Dallas Independent School District -- now used as a maintenance facility. (photo by author)

First as the location of *Cedar Valley Public School*, then as *Benito Juarez Elementary School*, now a maintenance facility, this site has been a school property for over 125 years.

Cedar Valley Baptist Church

Most of the history of *Cedar Valley Baptist Church* is located north of today's Singleton Boulevard, outside the William Coombes Survey's square mile, therefore outside my scope of research; but, early activities of the congregation were associated with the *Cedar Valley Public School* building and therefore this church will be briefly discussed here. Like the Baptist congregation(s) south of the railroad tracks and up on the escarpment, an early *Cedar Valley Baptist* group was cited in *Dallas Morning News* stories. As early as 1902 it was announced that the Sunday School of the *West Dallas Baptist Church* would be "reorganized" and that Reverend A.M. Green would "conduct a children's service at Cedar Valley School".²⁸ It's unclear whether or not this was the same group as the *West Dallas Baptist Church* of Western Heights. A 1908 announcement advertised a "protracted meeting ... at the Cedar Valley Baptist Church, West Dallas".²⁹ It's unknown exactly where that church building might have been located, but the most likely possibility is that it met inside the *Cedar Valley School* building.

Years later it was reported that a *Cedar Valley Baptist* had been established in 1929, and in 1948 had been renamed *First Baptist Church of West Dallas*.³⁰ Like the Baptists in Western Heights, the *Cedar Valley Baptists* seem to have started and reorganized their neighborhood Baptist church several different times. In 1933, burial rites at *Western Heights Cemetery* for 28 year old Marvin Ivan (Buck) Barrow, infamous outlaw of Bonnie & Clyde's gang, were conducted by Rev. Frank Dailey, pastor of *Cedar Valley Baptist Church*.³¹ A brick church building one block north of Singleton, at 531 Toronto, still stands where *First Baptist Church of West Dallas* was reported to be meeting until the mid-1970s.³²

(End)

FOOTNOTES:

1. 1896-July-21st; *Dallas Morning News*; page 8; *Cedar Valley Populists*.
2. 1902-March-2nd; *Dallas Morning News*; page 6; *Church Notes*
3. Dallas County Deed Records; Volume 74, page 516; 1886-April-12th; Elfeda (Coombes Mills and husband to James D. Griffin).
4. Dallas County Deed Records; Volume 179, page 298; 1893-November-11th; James D. Griffin and wife to John D. Cole.
5. 1905-June-11th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 6; *Scholastic Census Figures*.
6. 1908-August-12th; *Dallas Morning News*, page 14; *Much Work on County Schools*.
7. 1909-June-4th; *Dallas Morning News*, page 5; *Gets Census Returns from Many Districts*.
8. 1911-September-11th; *Dallas Morning News*, page 15; *Cedar Valley School Burns*.
9. 1924-August 26th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 9; *West Dallas Schools to Begin Term Sept. 15*.
10. 1927-July-20th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 13; *Board Back Adding West Dallas Area*.
11. 1928-December-12th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 6; *Schools Gain 2,550 Students*.
12. Dallas City Directory 1933-1934; page 2090, (via UNT 's internet site: *Portal to Texas History*).
13. 1933-September-16th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 5; *Enrolling Students Reaches 41,317*
14. 1934- September-2nd; *Dallas Morning News*; page 7; *Public School Teach Staff of 1,048 Increased*.
15. Same as Note 14 above.
16. 1937- September-29th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 3; *Parents Petition School Reopening to Save Children*.
see also: 1938-July-17th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 13; *Would Reopen Cedar Valley School*.
17. 1939-October-6th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 1; *Oust Nesters from School, League Asks*.
18. 1938-September-15th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 12; *Schools Enroll 40,582; Gain of 1,627 Made*.
19. 2026; "About" tab on internet website of *St. Mary of Carmel; Dallas, Texas*. (<http://www.smcpardallas.org/about-us>)
20. 1970-July-9th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 12; *School Gets Name of De Zavala*.
21. 1972-February-17th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 1; *Judge OKs Construction of 7 School Projects*.
22. 1972-November-11th; WBAP-TV news report script; (via UNT 's internet site: *Portal to Texas History*).
The WFAA news broadcast image made at *Benito Juarez* was from 1971
23. 1980-September-1st; *Dallas Morning News*; page 1D; *Communities find new schools a dream come true*.
24. Same as Note 21 above.
25. Same as Note 23 above.
26. 1983-March 2th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 13A; *\$12 Million Offered for DISD Sites*.
27. 1983-February 11th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 84; *Advertisement*.
28. Same as Note 2 above.
29. 1908-October-6th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 4; *Revival in West Dallas*.
30. 1948-December-16th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 14; *Church Name Changed*.
1954-October-8th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 16; *Baptist Church In West Dallas Sets Anniversary*.
31. 1931-August-1st; *Dallas Morning News*; page 1; *Quiet Funeral Marks Finish to Barrow's Career ...*
32. 1973-July-17th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 12; *Paint-Snuffing Law from Council Urged*.

(End of Footnotes)