

Gymnasium Building, Granger Isd

I. Context

This narrative, being the request for historical marker status for the Gymnasium Building at Granger ISD, is written as an addendum to the narrative submitted for and awarded Historical Marker status for the High School Building . . . Granger ISD. (5) The narrative written in 1992 by Loretta Skrovan Mikulencak presented a total picture of education and all its needs in early Granger, and how this “school plant” became the area of learning for students of this area for the past eighty years.

II. Overview

The Gymnasium Building, (1) built in 1940, was borne of a need to further build on the skills of the athletes enrolled, providing a permanent all-weather home, and still today, this building provides for and brings to the students the very same facilities to accomplish all the same goals as in days gone past.

III. Historical Significance

This subject building, (1) being constructed in the Art Deco Style was built of concrete, reinforced by steel beams and bears a wooden roof, as evidenced in the minutes and records of the Granger Board of Trustees and also in the plans submitted by architect, Travis Broesche of Brenham, Texas. The cost of building this structure of other woods or stone was the limiting factor and therefore the look of a grey mission concrete structure was achieved. The north and south walls were lined with steel casement windows, and the interior original bleachers of concrete are still used today. There exists only the wooden floor and the wooden planks for the seating on the bleachers. Plaster was used in the interior, with steel reinforced doors. The round dormers were built to house the dressing rooms and restrooms, and these, too, are plaster over concrete walls. The complete structure is one of the many public buildings built throughout Texas by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (3),

and for all the many buildings and projects built. Buildings such as this gymnasium are slowly becoming a rarity. The WPA was the largest New Deal agency, employing millions of people and affecting most every locality, especially rural populations. It was created in April, 1935 by the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This agency was activated with Congressional funding in July of that year and later funded by the US Congress. The greatest single area of WPA projects in Texas, one-fourth of the construction costs had to be provided by sponsors. This was a regulation imposed by the Texas WPA administrators, there being no federal requirement for matching money. Construction projects included stadiums, parks and other recreational public buildings, but recreational leadership and organizational help were also boosted under the WPA. An attempt was made to provide leisure-time activities for persons of all ages, races and economic groups during all seasons of the year. Under such guidance, the Gymnasium Building was built and still stands very strong, representing the dedication and the strong will of accomplishment by the workers employed by this agency and of the educators as well, who dreamed of bigger and better facilities for their students and community. Therefore, this building is deemed worthy of historical recognition as it represented the time in our nation where this program continued and extended relief to all in the time of their greatest need.

IV. Documentation

With the construction of the magnificent school building in September, 1925, the community realized the reality of their dreams. This building brought hope of future growth and with this “grand school,” the school attendance soared. There came the need to bring to the students more areas of study, more advantages for sports as well as other skills. The idea of building this gymnasium was born after much was accomplished by various sports teams, who did not have a guaranteed place of practice and play on the school grounds. Yet, the determination of the students prevailed as they touted UIL State Championships as well as Regional ones. Weather contributed also to the needs to bring to the students a permanent place for all practices and games. Such needs continued to be studied, but finances were in short

supply as the new school construction had indebted the community with bond money needed to be repaid. The economy was stressed and money did not come easy. But the hope of such a facility continued to grow.

The School Board of Trustees of GISD was made aware of the agency providing labor and some monetary help in the construction of such public school building. The results of such interest are evidenced in the minutes of said Board. The following are excerpts taken from the Minutes of Board of Trustees Min Books, duly signed and recorded.

April 8th, 1920 (2)

“Problems relative the WPA Gymnasium and Grounds Project were discussed. The following architects interested in the projects appeared before the board: Clifford H. James of Austin, Scott and Shingle also of Austin, and Travis Broesche of Brenham. A motion was made by R.A. Alford and seconded by F.J. Mikulencak that Travis Broesche be employed as an architect at a fee of 3% for preparation and 2% for supervision on the gymnasium building and 2% for preparation and supervision on the grounds project. Motion carried, all voting “aye”.”

April 9th, 1940 (2)

Upon motion of G.F. Wilcox, seconded by John P. Trlica the following order canvassing the returns and declaring the results of said school bond election, was unanimously adopted. For the Issuance 216 votes
Against the Issuance 153 votes”

April 18th, 1940 (2)

“A motion was made by John P. Trlica and seconded by C.J. Daniels to build the Gymnasium out of reinforced concrete. Motion carried, all voting “aye.”

April 23rd, 1940 (2)

“The problem of purchasing the land for the Gymnasium site was discussed. The need of an attorney was also discussed.”

June 24, 1940 (2)

The original plans and original specs were submitted on June 24th, 1940 as evidenced from the still existing copies of such.

July 8th, 1940 (2)

“The following resolution was presented for consideration:

Resolved That:

WHEREAS, the Granger Independent School District, hereinafter referred to as the sponsor, has applied to the Government of the United States of America, through the Work Projects Administration, for a WPA project, District Serial Number 9-1098 WP No. 6784...

The above resolution was offered by C.J. Daniels, seconded by John P. Trlica, and being put to a vote by the chairman, was unanimously adopted.”

July 31, 1940 (2)

“Motion made by G.F. Wilcox, seconded by F.J. Mikulencak to purchase Lots 7, 8, and west 20 feet of lot 9 in Block 48 (6), now owned by John Baca, for the sum of \$200 that said sum be paid when party delivers deed and said deed be approved by M.B. Colbert. Motion carried.”

August 21st, 1940 (2)

“There came on for consideration by the Board of Trustees the question of authorizing the issuance of \$16,000 of said school district’s bonds for the purpose of building, equipping, repairing and purchasing site for a gymnasium, and after being duly presented ...

Bond Number 1 date of maturity Sept. 1, 1941 amount \$250

And continuing thru.....

Bond Number 20 date of maturity Sept. 1, 1960 amount \$2,000
Until all is paid.

The above order being read, it was moved by Crawford Daniel and seconded by F.J. Mikulencak that the same do pass. Thereupon, the questing being called for, the following members of the Board voted "aye": G.F. Wilcox, F.J. Mikulencak, Edward F. Kubala, Joe N. Bohac, Crawford Daniel and John P. Trlica, and the following vote "no": None.

Finally the news arrived:

September 21, 1940 (2)

"The Meeting was called to order by President James Cavanaugh, the following telegram from Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson was read:

Washington DC 4:32 p.m. Sept. 18, 1940

James Cavanaugh

Granger, Texas

Happy to tell you President Roosevelt has approved Granger Gymnasium Project WPA 50169 in the amount of \$33,504.

Lyndon B. Johnson

5:42 p.m.

It appearing from said telegram that the district's application for a federal grant to help construct and equip a gymnasium, repair school buildings and improve grounds, had been finally approved and that said district should proceed with the sale of its bonds in the amount of \$16,000. Heretofore authorized, for the purpose of matching said federal funds, the following motion was made by C.J. Daniel and seconded by Joe N. Bohac. Motion unanimously passed.

The Gymnasium Building became a reality and was put to good use. As the cornerstone confirms:

Erected A.D. 1940
Granger Public Schools

And Work Project Administration

School Superintendent

Herman Barkley

Board of Trustee

James Cavanaugh

President

G.F. Wilcos, Vice-Pres. Edward F. Kubala, Sec.

R.A. Alford

John P. Trlica

F.J. Mikulencak

Joe Rozacky

C.J. Daniel

Joe N. Bohac

Today the grand structure still is being used daily for all sports and by all students attending GISD. Scores and scores of students had passed through the subject building and each with his/her own memories of their happy days and accomplishments at Granger High School.

Today the interior of the building shows that it had been refurbished during the years many times, first to bring safety and comfort as well as the total look to enhance the building throughout, and yet not ever had the building been in any way reinforced or remodeled or reconstructed, as a copy of the original plans Travis Broesche, Architect and Engineer, Brenham, Texas, confirms.

The Granger School Gymnasium, situated a few steps south of the Granger School Building, has been an asset to the community for all years. Social gatherings, banquets and proms had been held in this structure welcoming all alumni for gatherings and reunions, as well as being targeted for possible use as a refugee center for storm victims. The Granger School Gymnasium also represents and still witnesses the great works of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, and should be so marked as a Texas Historical Landmark to ensure that such history is not lost or forgotten.

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Endnotes

1. Architectural Plans-Travis Broesche,
Architect, Brenham, Texas
Blueprints in researchers'
possession
2. Minutes of the Board of Trustees'
Meetings of Granger ISD-1940
In researchers' possession
3. WIKIPEDIA, the Free Encyclopedia
http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Work_Progress_administration, 02/06/08
In researchers' possession
4. Yearbook – Lion's Roar
1949 Copy
In researchers' possession
5. Narrative for application for
Historical marker status-School Building, ISD
In researchers' possession
6. Court Records of Williamson County
Court Building
Georgetown, Texas
7. Map – Topozone
In researchers' possession