

"The Magnificent Gift": A History of C. H. Yoe High School

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In a small town in Central Texas sits a magnificent three-story building built in 1921 and surrounded by a modern building built in 2004. The buildings are named after a prominent citizen of the town as a “fitting and worthy testimony” (Yoe, 1919, p. 1) of his love for the town. The 1921 building has been called “a magnificent gift” (*Cam-hi*, 1921).



Cameron, Texas

Cameron is located in Central Texas approximately 140 miles northwest of Houston and approximately 150 miles south of Dallas. Cameron was established as the county seat of Milam County on April 4, 1846, and lies next to the Little River (W. W. Oxsheer, 1893). Oxsheer described Cameron as "a sandy spot among the scrub oaks" (W. W. Oxsheer, 1893, p 257). The town was laid out by A. W. Sullivan, Benjamin Bryant, John Hobson, and Daniel Monroe (W. W. Oxsheer, 1893) and named after Captain Ewen Cameron, a native of the Scottish Highlands who was shot on April 25, 1843, on the order of Mexican General Santa Anna (Henderson, 1957).

Population. The first United States census in which Cameron is included is the 1890 census in which 440 people were reported as citizens of Cameron in 1880 and 1,608 reported in 1890 (United States (U.S.) Census Bureau, 2016a). The population rose sharply in 1900 but

decreased slightly in 1910. For thirty years (1920-1950), the census showed increases in the population (See Figure 1). The population showed a little over 5,000 in 1940 and never reached the 6,000 mark with the largest number of people recorded at 5,721 in 1980—100 years after the first reported population. The population of Cameron has stayed relatively steady since 1980. The estimated population for 2014 was 5,398.

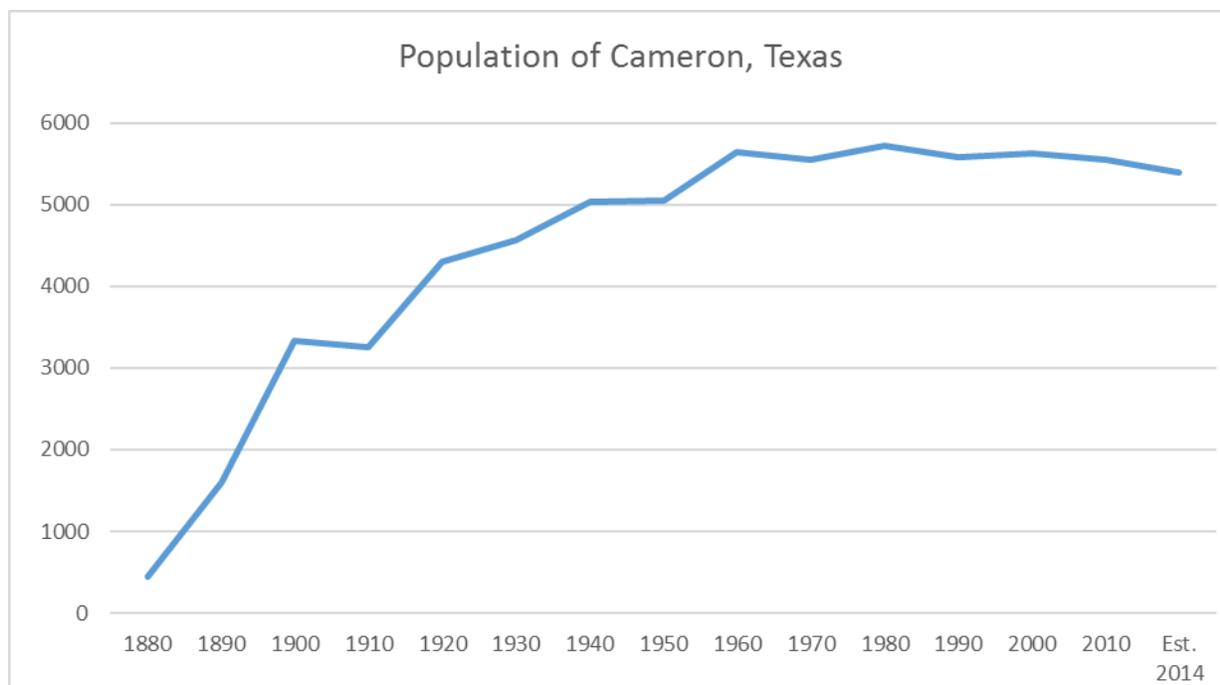


Figure 1. Population of Cameron, Texas 1880-2014 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016)

Cameron is a diverse community. The ethnicity of its history have mostly consisted of Anglo-Saxons, Germans¹, Austrians, Czechs (Bohemians), Blacks, and Hispanics (Batte, 1956). In 1846, Germans Frederick and Rose Elizabeth Meyers settled in Milam County (C. H. Yoe, 1893). Their daughter, Caroline, was born in Cameron in 1850 and was the first white child to be entered into the introductory census of Milam County (Obermiller, 1950). By the 1870

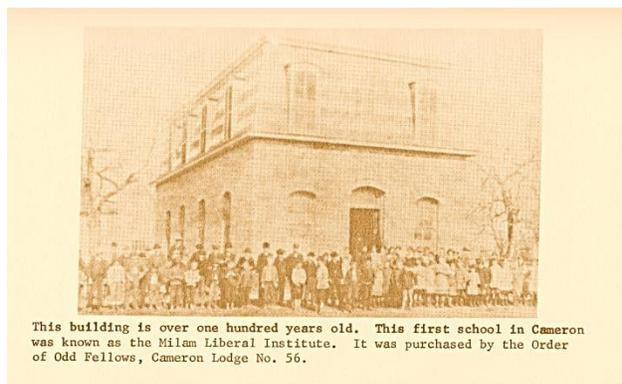
¹ The German influence is evidenced in the 1914 yearbook of Cameron High School with its opening “Wie Gehts!” and closing “Auf Wiedersehen!”

census, there were 50 citizens listed with origins from Austria (which at the time included Czechoslovakia) (Batte, 1956). The 1890 U.S. Census recorded the citizens living in Milam County were 57 from Mexico, 406 from Germany, 205 from Austria, and 110 from Bohemia with a total of 6,205 Colored (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016a). The 2010 U. S. Census recorded 3,641 whites, 1,124 Blacks or African American, 32 American Indian or Alaska Native, 22 Asian, 665 as some other race, 68 as two or more races, and 1,864 Hispanic or Latino (of any race) for Cameron (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016a).

Industry. The major industry in Cameron at the time of its inception was agribusiness. The agribusinesses included stock-raising, truck farming, fruit farming, dairy and poultry farming (Batte, 1956). Farmers produced mostly corn, wheat, and oats as well as sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, peas, and beans (Arthur, 1972). The production of cotton, growing and processing, became a major industry around the beginning of the Civil War (Arthur, 1972; W. W. Oxsheer, 1893). In 1913, the discovery of natural gas in Milam County brought substantial oil and gas industry to the region (Arthur, 1972). Although the Alcoa Aluminum Company (ALCOA) began production in Rockdale in 1954, Cameron benefited from the additional growth since it is approximately 20 miles north of Rockdale (Smryl, 2010). Other companies that have been in Cameron have included the Kraft-Phenix Cheese Corporation in 1935 (closed during World War II and did not reopen), a door manufacturing company, a school and office furniture manufacturing company, and a dress factory (Arthur, 1972). Cameron’s longest surviving industry has been the beekeeping industry. The first meeting of the Central Texas Beekeepers’ Association was held in Cameron in the spring of 1896 (Arthur, 1972). According to the Cameron Industrial Foundation website (2012), there were six health care businesses with just over 450 employees and five agribusinesses employing just under 100

employees in Cameron. The largest employers in Cameron were the Cameron Independent School District (225 employees) and Standards Home Health (250 employees) (Cameron Industrial Foundation, 2012).

Education. As the city of Cameron was beginning to be developed, the “schools were not plentiful” (W. W. Oxsheer, 1893, p. 259) because the citizens did not “depend so much upon books as now” (W. W. Oxsheer, 1893, p. 259). The first school in Cameron



This building is over one hundred years old. This first school in Cameron was known as the Milam Liberal Institute. It was purchased by the Order of Odd Fellows, Cameron Lodge No. 56.

Source: *History of the Buildings and People of "Old Town" Cameron*

was Milam Liberal Institute² which was incorporated with the approval of Governor George T. Wood in 1848 (Batte, 1956). The school had one teacher and forty-one students in 1850; ten years later, the school had two teachers and ninety students (Batte, 1956). Funds for the school included \$400 of taxation in 1850 and was increased to \$728 in 1860 (Batte, 1956).

Two other private schools were also establish during the late 1800s—Port Sullivan Male and Female College and Davilla Institute (Batte, 1956). Port Sullivan Male and Female College was chartered in 1863. The charter allowed the establishment of a military department and allowed for the granting of degrees. The college lasted until 1877. Davilla Institute was established in 1873 to grant degrees in science and arts. The institute closed in 1877 (Batte, 1956).

Milam County had public schools as early as 1850 according to the census of that year. The census indicated there were seven common schools with seven teachers and 138 students. The 1860 census showed 11 common schools with 11 teachers and 496 students (Batte, 1956).

² The building is still in existence and is considered the oldest building in Cameron. The building was sold in 2014. (Hanel, 2016).

These schools were created before Texas legislation established its school system in 1854 (Batte, 1956). In 1885, legislation created a district system; however, Milam County was exempt because the county had developed community schools. In 1893, Milam County switched to the district organization (Batte, 1956).



Cameron began public schooling in 1890 (Green, 1970). A new high school in the city was built in 1891 and was referred as Cam-Hi. After the construction of the school was completed, the school burnt to the ground



Source: Cam-Hi (1921 Yearbook)

on April 28. The school was reconstructed on the same spot and completed in July, 1891³ (Dodson, 2010; Green, n.d.). In 1893, the Cameron Negro School was located near the city dump and did not have a well. Negro citizens contributed \$100 for the purchase of land elsewhere. The city purchased land from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Batte, 1956). In 1896 an addition was added to Cameron Negro School. (Batte, 1956).

During this time period, students attended Cam-Hi only through the tenth grade. In 1903 the eleventh grade was added. Cameron switched to a twelve-grade system in 1940 (Green, 1970), six years ahead of the State of Texas’ requirement of public schools to be 12 grades (Watlington, 2014).

Although schools were not plentiful in Milam County (W. W. Oxsheer, 1893), there is evidence that some of the residents from Milam County felt education was important as indicated by last will and testaments. The last will and testament of Frederick Neibling dated 1846 stated

³ Cam-Hi was officially closed in 1926 and the building torn down sometime in the 1950s. The cornerstone of the building remains at its original location (Class report in possession of the Milam County Historical Museum, March, 1921).

his children were to learn specific subjects like geography, arithmetic, and grammar as well as the English language which he believed were “sufficient if well learned” (as cited in Batte, 1956, p. 178). John Nance requested his estate provide a liberal education for his children to have “high moral training” (as cited in Batte, 1956, p. 178) in his will dated 1869. C. C. Penuel left word in his 1878 will that his son attend one of the Ivy League Schools, specifically Yale or Princeton, or Dickenson College to study law (Batte, 1956). Perhaps the most well know last will and testament in Milam County was that of Carolyn Meyers Yoe who bequeathed in 1919 a large sum of money to build a high school in Cameron which was considered the “most substantial gift to education in Milam County” (Batte, 1956, p. 187).

C. H. and Caroline Yoe

Caroline Meyers married Charles H. Yoe in 1871. C. H. Yoe was a German immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1860 (Shuffield, 2005). Although he grew up on a farm in



Source: *Cam-Hi* (1921 Yearbook)

Germany, upon his arrival to America he learned the blacksmith trade. Yoe spent time learning his trade in Baltimore. He then traveled to Washington D.C. and New Orleans working as a blacksmith and wheelwright (Life sketch of donors, 1921; Shuffield, 2005). After recovering from yellow fever while living in New Orleans, Yoe made his way to Milam County, Texas, by way of Galveston, Texas, where he tried his hand as a merchant (Life sketch of donors, 1921).

After a blizzard hit Texas and ruined the steamer of oranges that Yoe had purchased for his fruit store, Yoe boarded the Houston & Texas Central train to Millican in Brazos County (Life sketch of donors, 1921). While living in Millican he was tasked with bringing a load of coffee to Milam County where he ended up making his home in 1869 (Life sketch of donors, 1921; Shuffield, 2005). Upon arrival in Milam County, Yoe tried farming but commented that he “did not like seeing money only once a year” (Life sketch of donors, 1921, p. 4). He turned to being a blacksmith in Cameron for ten years, saving his money in order to venture into the mercantile business (Shuffield, 2005).

Yoe found success as a merchant. He built the first brick building in Cameron and had at one time employed seven men (Life sketch of donors, 1921). The building was a two-story structure. The first story contained the business’s stock, which was mainly for farmers, and the second story contained an opera house which later became a skating rink (Life sketch of donors, 1921). With his fortune from his mercantile business, Yoe purchased farm and city property. At one time he owned over 600 acres of farmland on which was grown cotton (Shuffield, 2005).

Seen as a prominent citizen of Cameron, Yoe sold his mercantile business in January, 1892 (Shuffield, 2005). He was named president of Cameron Water, Power and Light Company when it was created in 1894 (Tomek, 1962). For a short length of time, he held the office of County Treasurer (Shuffield, 2005). Yoe belonged to the Knights of Honor and the Masons (Shuffield, 2005). While a member of the Masons, he held the office of Worshipful Master twice (Reid, 1960). Yoe embraced the Lutheran faith until 15 years before his death at which time he joined the Presbyterian church (Life sketch of donors, 1921). Yoe died December 1, 1917, after becoming ill (Life sketch of donors, 1921) and was laid to rest with Masonic honors (Reid, 1960) at Oak Hills Cemetery (Obermiller, 1950).

Carolyn Meyers Yoe was born on February 8, 1850, to Fredrick and Rose Elizabeth Meyers. Mrs. Yoe’s parents had immigrated to the United States from Germany around 1845 (Life sketch of donors, 1921). Her education consisted of seven years in a log cabin where she graduated top in her class (Life sketch of donors, 1921).

The Yoes were married on March 20, 1871. As the wife of C. H. Yoe, Mrs. Yoe is said to have provided council and affectionate friendship to her husband. Mrs. Yoe gave birth to a daughter, Laura Lizzie, in 1872. Laura died at the age of five and is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery beside her parents. Mrs. Yoe raised her five brothers after the death of her parents (Life sketch of donors, 1921). Mrs. Yoe passed away June 4, 1922.

The Yoes had a “deep and abiding affection for the city of Cameron and its people” (Yoe, 1919, p. 1). They sought a way to give back to the city. Although a successful businessman, C. H. Yoe felt he was handicapped due to his lack of education (Life sketch of donors, 1921). He and his wife decided to “give some fitting and worthy testimony of our love for Cameron, and our ideal of such a testimonial was a public high school building” (Yoe, 1919, p. 1). Plans for the new school were started in 1916; however, the idea of building a school was deferred upon the death of C. H. Yoe in 1917 (Life sketch of donors, 1921).

C. H. Yoe High School

1920s. After the death of C. H. Yoe, Mrs. Yoe’s Last Will and Testament dated August 29, 1919, made provisions for the construction of a public school in Cameron. Her will states:

His [C. H. Yoe’s] death postponed the consummation of this purpose but it has never been absent from my mind, and I now desire to make its realization secure by providing for it in my will. I do now therefore provide for the erection,

completion and maintenance of a Public High School Building for the City of Cameron to be known as “The C. H. Yoe High School.” (Yoe, 1919, p. 1).

Mrs. Yoe left detailed information as to the amount of money that could be spent, that the school should be insured against fire, the school would be for white children only (\$75,000 Hospital, 1922), and that “on the second Thursday in May...studies shall be suspended for the day and in some appropriate ceremony flowers shall be placed on the tomb of my beloved husband by the students of said school” (Yoe, 1919, p. 2).

Despite the fact that Mrs. Yoe had made provisions for the construction of a public school, she moved forward with her and her husband’s dream. A. N. Green, M. C. Sapp, and J.C. Reese were named as trustees for the building (\$75,000 Hospital, 1922; Batte, 1956). Mrs. Yoe was involved with the building plans and the selection of equipment (Life sketch of donors, 1921). An architecture firm that specialized in school buildings, C. H. Page & Brother Architects from Austin, Texas, was selected as the architects for the project (C. H. Page, 1921). The contracting firm of J. Wattinger & Sons (Cornerstone of C. H. Yoe High School, 1921) was selected



Architect’s rendering. Source: *Cameron Enterprise*, March 3, 1921

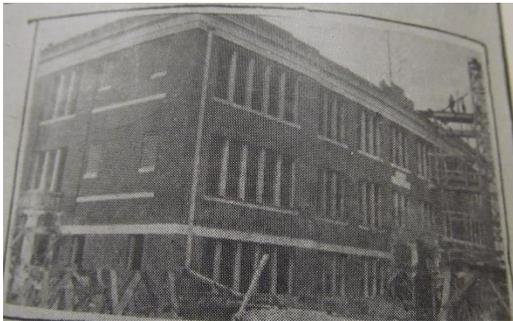
to build the school. Mrs. Yoe stipulated in her will that the school was:

...to be erected on lots No. six and seven, Reese Addition to the City of Cameron, of some permanent and lasting material and of a size and style suitable for a high school for said city, and to cost not less than fifty thousand dollars (50,000), and not more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000) and to be officially designated by the City “The C. H. Yoe High School” (Yoe, 1919, p. 1).

Construction was completed in March 1921, with dedication of the school held March 8 and the first classes being held on March 9 (*Cam-Hi*, 1921; To dedicate, 1921).

The *Cameron Enterprise* documented the dedication invitation and the structure of the new school with great detail in its March 3, 1921, issue. The public was invited and encouraged to attend the dedication of the C. H. Yoe High School (To dedicate, 1921). The newspaper commented that the dedication would be a “memorable day in the city’s history” (To dedicate, 1921, p. 1) and that it was “the desire of Mrs. Yoe and the school trustees that all of the Cameron people be there if it is possible” (To dedicate, 1921, p. 1).

When constructing C. H. Yoe High School, all modern conveniences and school equipment of the time were integrated into the building (Description of building, 1921). The



school was a three-story, fireproof structure made of grey brick with white stone trimming. The building contained three entrances with the main entrance facing south and with a fire escape located at the rear

Source: *Cam-Hi* (1921 Yearbook)

of the building. There were electric lights, running water, and gas used to help generate the steam for the radiator heating. A water fountain was placed “in a prominent place” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1).

There were 22 rooms in the building which included a study hall, library, recitation rooms, auditorium (assembly hall), and superintendent’s office. The rooms were constructed with plastered walls that were “beautifully tinted” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The woodwork in the building was made of oak or oak finish. Teachers were given their own office

and there was a special room placed next to the principal’s office for the State books. The stairs⁴ were made of concrete (Hanel, 2016) and “easy to climb” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1).

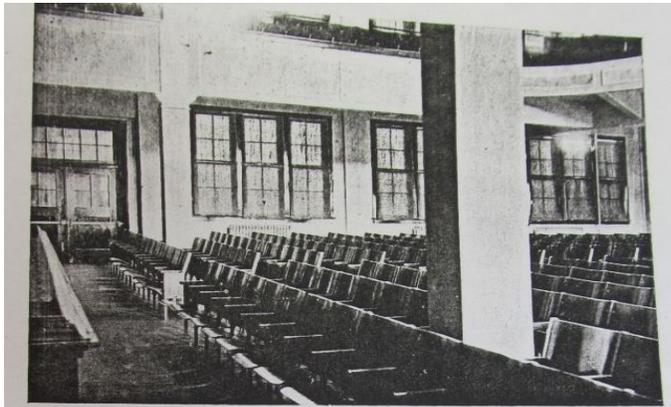


East Side



West Side

The auditorium or assembly hall was described as “a thing of beauty and a joy” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). There was seating for 700 with wide aisles. The seats were



Source: Memorial Program (1921)

“the best to be secured in that line” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The endcaps contained the letter “Y” and were installed by C. A. Bryant Company of Dallas, Texas. Under the seat was a wire grid that could be used to hold a cowboy

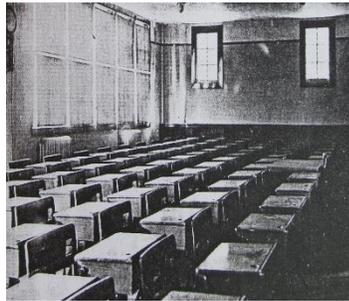


hat (Stork, 2016). The auditorium consisted of gallery seating that was similar to the lower level



⁴ There were two stairways, one at the east entrance and one at the west entrance. To alleviate congestion on the stairway, students went up the east stairway and down the west stairway (Jeter, 2016; Stork, 2016).

and with access from the third floor. (Only seniors were allowed in the gallery during the 1960s (Schiller, 2016).) The stage was large with lights “arranged to give the best effect” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1) and was complete with curtains and a Steinway piano. “Everything in the auditorium is high grade and is absolutely the best in this section of the State” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1).



Source: Memorial Program (1921)

The study hall room was created as a “quiet place for the students to study during vacant periods” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1) and was to be used for overflow of the recitation rooms. Six lights were strategically placed “for any night work that may be done” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1) with eleven windows for additional light and for air space that was required by law. The room included shelving for all books “that may be needed by the pupils” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1).

“Endorsed by schools and colleges everywhere” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1), the recitation rooms (similar to a modern day lecture hall) were “well lighted” and contained “more than the amount of air space that is recommended which will insure healthy and comfortable conditions” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The



desks, tables, and chairs were made of heavy solid oak or oak finish with the desk and chairs being separate “so that no amount of moving of a student can in any way effect the one in the seat back of him” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). Each recitation room contained a book

storage room to “enable the scholars to have the text and reference books” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1) at any time.

The library was adjacent to the study hall room and the assembly hall (auditorium) and was equipped with “heavy tables and leather covered chairs” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The library was opened to all citizens of Cameron “at any and all times” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The librarian was responsible for ringing the bell signifying the beginning



and ending of classes (Stork, 2016). The bell ringer was located close to the library doors. If the doors to the library were open, some students would try to

reach into the library and ring the bell (as told to Stork, 2016).

The domestic science department contained the “most modern and up-to-date equipment for this branch of schoolwork” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). Domestic science consisted of cooking, sewing, and designing. Light and gas connections were provided for the cook tables. The sewing rooms were “amply spacious for the work in that line” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). Individual working sets and lockers were provided for every student. The third floor contained the music and expression department, the science department, and the restrooms. The music and expression department encompassed three rooms with double walls. This department consisted of piano, voice, expression and public speaking, girls’ high school orchestra, and the Cameron Concert Band (which was made up mostly of school men) (*Cam-Hi*, 1921). The science department contained a lecture room between the laboratories. Individual lockers were provided each



Source: *The Yoeman* (1963)

student. The laboratories included gas and water connections and fume cases for poison gas “that let out the fumes without filling the lab” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The restrooms were modern containing modern equipment and conveniences for the students.

The superintendent’s office was furnished with solid oak throughout with “colors and decorations” that “harmonize” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The office was equipped with a steel, fireproof vault.

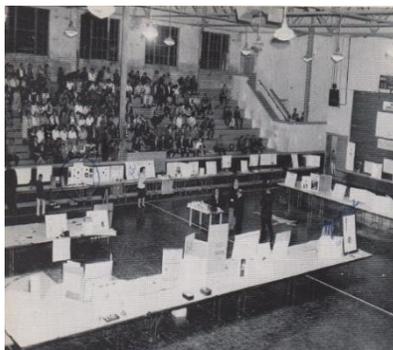
The gymnasium equipment was selected “with great care” (Description of building, 1921,



Source: *The Yoe-Yoe* (1950)

p. 1) and contained “every apparatus that is needed and desirable in the modern gymnasium” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The basketball court was a special

feature as it allowed for night games and indoor practice when “weather conditions did not allow for an out-of-door court” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1). The gymnasium included individual lockers and a gallery. The gallery afforded people the “opportunity to witness games and other performances” (Description of building, 1921, p. 1).



Source: *The Yoeman* (1964)

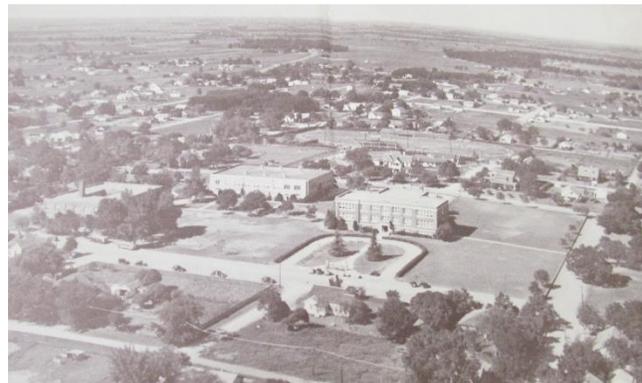


The *Cameron Enterprise* printed an advertisement in the March 3, 1921, issue that described the furniture located in the new C. H. Yoe High School:

The desks are the Eclipse Adjustable Open Box, manufactured by the Heywood Brothers and Wakefield. The woodwork being of beautiful quartered oak design. Standards being of pressed steel angle iron, thus making the desks both substantial and the highest quality obtainable. Each pupil has an individual desk and seat, which are adjustable to their own convenience.

The grounds of the school were large enough for athletics and Mrs. Yoe’s will provided for the maintenance of the grounds. A regular supervisor was to be hired to “keep the grounds attractive” (Description of building, 1921).

Mrs. Yoe’s will requested the trustees purchase bonds in the amount of \$3,000 and the interest on the bonds “to keep the property in good condition in the care and maintenance of the C. H. Yoe High School Building and grounds” (\$75,000 Hospital, 1922).



Source: *The Yoe-Yoe* (1948)

The cost of the school was restricted to “not less than fifty thousand dollars (50,000), and not more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000)” (Yoe, 1919, p. 1). However, due to inflation caused by World War I, the cost was more than she expected⁵ (Batte, 1956).

⁵ According to the United States Department of Labor CPI Inflation Calculator (2016b), \$125,000 was the equivalent of \$129,335.26 in 1921 and was the equivalent of \$1,662,932 in 2016.

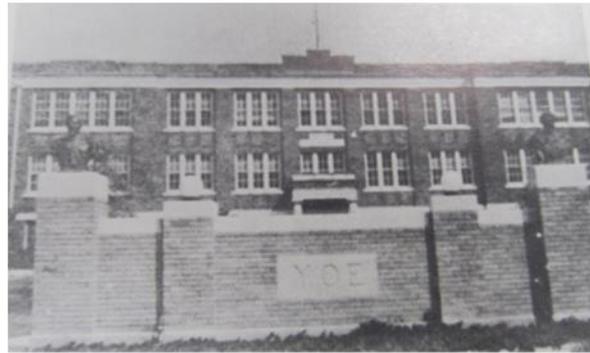
Other bequests by Mrs. Yoe that were connected to C. H. Yoe High School included \$15,000 for a manual training department⁶, \$5,000 to assist in the funding of the Charles Lawless Green Students’ Loan Fund, and 43 acres of land to be used for “experimental and practical instructions in agriculture, horticulture and kindred sciences” (\$75,000 Hospital, 1922). The commercial department of C. H. Yoe High School was named after and dedicated to Charles Lawless Green, a citizen of Cameron, who was killed in an airplane accident in 1919. Charles Lawless Green Students’ Loan Fund was developed to help adult students who “are worthy and desire to can attend and all tuition will be paid” (Commercial Department, 1921, p. 4).

The school’s dedication was held on March 8, 1922, with the first classes held on March 9, 1922. The graduating class of 1921 willed to Mrs. Yoe “an abundance of respect and gratitude for her magnanimous gift” (*Cam-Hi*, 1921). Mrs. Yoe was in attendance at the graduation exercises. In the first codicil to her will, she wrote “I had the joy and happiness of witnessing the graduating exercises of the Class of 1920-’21, held in its assembly hall” (\$75,000 Hospital, 1922). Mrs. Yoe transferred the school deed to the trustees in February, 1921, who turned over the deed to the school system on August 2, 1924 (Batte, 1956).

Since the construction of C. H. Yoe High School, many changes have occurred to the school building and campus. The first change to occur was the addition of two bronze busts of C. H. and Carolyn Yoe. Pompeo Coppini was commissioned to sculpt the busts in 1922 and were paid for by private donations (Smithsonian Institution, 2016). The busts stood as memorials on brick columns at the entrance to the campus (Batte, 1956). Mr. Yoe was placed on the left column and was sculpted sporting a moustache and goatee while “wearing a suit jacket over a

⁶ Manual training is a course to develop a skill that uses a person’s hands and teaches practical arts such as woodworking or metalworking (Merriam-Webster, 2016).

vest and wears a small bow tie” (Smithsonian Institution, 2016). Mrs. Yoe was placed on the right column and was sculpted with her hair pulled back and wearing “a high-collared blouse or dress” (Smithsonian Institution, 2016).



Source: *The Yoeman* (1981)



Through the years, the busts had been victims of pranks by rivals of Yoe High School. The busts were occasionally painted blue (cross-county rival Rockdale High School colors) (Hanel, 2016; Shuffield, 2016). One specific incident during Halloween had Mr. Yoe wearing a mock helmet shaped from a pumpkin with Rockdale High School logos (The hijinks, 2004). To clean the paint off the bronze busts, the busts were taken to the agriculture department and sandblasted (Hanel, 2016; Shuffield, 2016). Around 2005, the busts were appraised at \$30,000 each and were moved to the lobby of the new Performing Arts Center (Hanel, 2016).

Yoe High School’s football field is referred to as the Athletic Field and was built in 1923 by L. Van Perkins (A backward glance, 1986). The field contained the football field and track. It was said to be “a mecca for track and field events, and the home of the Yoemen, Cameron’s celebrated football team and athletics” (A backward glance, 1986, p. 3).

The landscape of the campus changed when the Ada Henderson School was built in 1925 (Cornerstone from Ada Henderson School, 1925). The school was used as an elementary then intermediate school and was where the high school students were served lunch. The school was demolished in 2004 and the cornerstone and keystones were incorporated into the landscaping of



the new Performing Arts Center which was built at the site of the Ada Henderson School.

1930s. Major changes occurred to the campus in 1934. The homemaking department and the band and other music classes were moved to the gymnasium (A backward glance, 1986). The construction work for this project was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a public works relief program (Luecke, 1972). During times of heavy rain, the area between the main building and the gymnasium was dubbed “Yoe Creek” (A backward glance, 1986). To alleviate the problem, the street was widened and “good shade trees” (A backward glance, 1986, p. 4) were cut down and a parking lot was created with the school paying one-third of the cost.

Cameron Independent School District (ISD) began consolidating with other rural districts in 1934 as a result of a decline in the school-age population (A backward glancing, 1986; Batte, 1956). This consolidation resulted in the need to bus rural students to school (Batte, 1956).



Source: *The Yoe-Yoe* (1961)

1940s. Cameron ISD purchased property known as the Triggs property in 1940. The purchase gave the system ownership of the entire block that was between the main building and the athletic field (School will buy, 1940). The 1940-1941 school year was the first year that the school went to a 12-grade system (Green, n.d.)

The Alumni Association was founded in 1945 (A backward glance, 1986), one year before Cameron’s centennial. The Yoe High Band participated in Cameron’s 100th birthday by providing music for the pageant that was held on the athletic field. The stage for the pageant was set up on the east side of the field (Henderson, 1957).

1950s. Nineteen fifty-two saw Cameron ISD separate from the City of Cameron and the start of construction on the Vocation Shop and Agriculture Department. The two buildings were



Source: *The Yoeman* (1964)

located between the gymnasium and the athletic field. The structures were completed in 1954 (Green, n.d.)

1960s. Significant changes occurred in the 1960s. Due to a hail storm that damaged some of the school windows, new windows were installed during the summer of 1965. The new windows improved the heating, cooling, and lighting “as well as the appearance” (School board plans, 1965, p. 108). The foreign language department received a new foreign language lab through the generosity of Dr. Billy Newton, a former Yoe High School graduate. The lab was called the Matilda M. Newton Memorial Language Laboratory after Dr. Newton’s wife (Art of communication, 1965). The school yearbook name was changed from “The Yoe-Yoe” to “The Yoeman” in 1963 (Schiller, 2016).



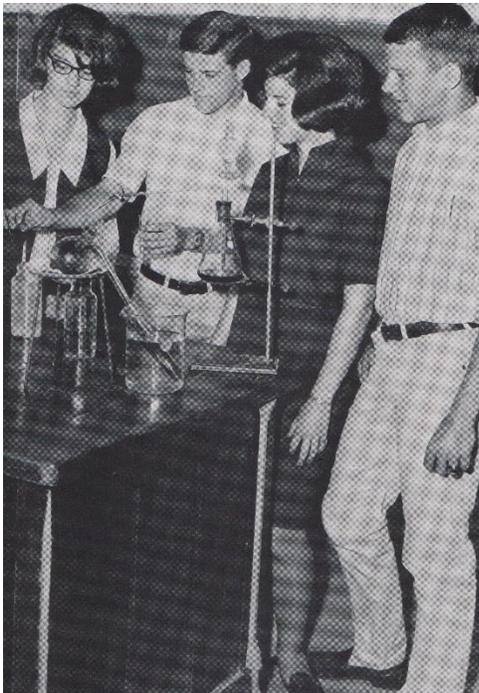
Source: *The Yoeman* (1965)

Minor changes that occurred in 1965 that benefited the student body was a new water cooler, a flag pole at the athletic field given by the Lions Club, and a coke machine (What’s New, 1965). The addition of the coke machine allowed the students to “have cokes between classes, and not have to watch and suffer as teachers drink cokes in the teachers [sic] lounge. Now, we can all walk by with our own cokes and smile gaily back at them” (What’s New, 1965, p. 4).

Additional changes that occurred in 1965 were the purchase of 56 new typing desks, a new tile floor in the chemistry lab along with new, modern lab furniture, and new finish on the gym floor (Yoe High meets, 1965). The typing desks were said to be larger and sturdier than the previous desks with storage for books. The total cost of the desks was \$875. The school newspaper described the removal of the old lab



Source: *The Yoeman* (1965)



Source: *The Yoeman* (1965)

furniture as follows: "...the medieval lab furniture was hauled down three flights of stairs by the Ag. boys, and up they brought the modern lab furniture" (Yoe High meets, 1965, p. 1). The new lab furniture consisted of new table tops and stools. The cost of the furniture and the tile floor was reported as being \$7,664. With regards to finishing the gym floor, the article stated that the work consisted of stripping the old wax, replacing rotten boards, applying new coats of varnish, and painting of

game markers. While the students were glad to see these changes, "The only regret, our Yoeman painted by former student Jamie Pavelek was removed in the process" (Yoe High meets, 1965, p.

1).

In 1966 Cameron ISD adopted a “freedom of choice” policy for integration of the school district (Green, n.d.). As an answer to the 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* ruling, the policy allowed black students to choose which school to attend (McKeon, 2014). In anticipation of the Supreme Court decision regarding a statewide desegregation order (McKeon, 2014), discussions by the school board began in June, 1968 (Board to discuss, 1968). The board voted to merge the top four classes (grades 9-12) of O. J. Thomas School (formerly known as Cameron Colored School), with Yoe High School (CISD joins center, 1968). The merge increased the school population by approximately 30 students. With the additional students, the need for added classroom space was also discussed. The board decided to move the Yoe High School library and study hall into the auditorium and to convert the former band room located in the gym into two classrooms (CISD joins center, 1968).



Source: *The Yoeman* (1973)



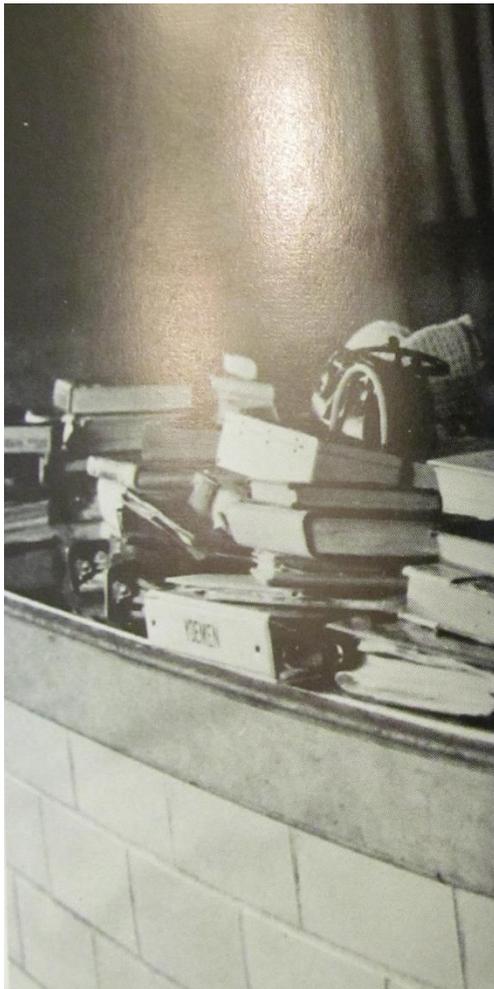
Cafeteria space also became an issue. Yoe High School was built without a cafeteria.

Therefore, the schools had been an open campus.

Students “brown-bagged it” (brought their lunches from home) and sat in the bleachers of the gym (Jeter, 2016) or were free to leave campus to go home or to purchase



Source: *The Yoeman* (1968)



Students leave their belongings on the stage at Ben Milam cafeteria. Source: *The Yoeman* (1969)

lunch at nearby sandwich shops. However, a new ruling in 1968

required students at Ben Milam and Ada Henderson⁷ Schools to eat at school or at home because there were no sandwich shops located within a safe walking distance (School lunchrooms, 1968). With the merging of the O. J. Thomas and Yoe High students and the closing of Chancey’s, a nearby sandwich shop, the lunchrooms were over capacity (Schedules for school, 1968). To alleviate the overcrowding, freshmen and sophomores starting being served lunch at Ada Henderson with the juniors and seniors being served at Ben Milam (Shuffield, 2016).

⁷ Ada Henderson School was built in 1925. Because this report concentrated on Yoe High School, whether Ada Henderson School had a cafeteria when it was built or if added later is uncertain. Ben Milam School was built in the 1950s. The National School Lunch Act was signed into law by President Harry S. Truman in 1946 (Carufel, 2015).



A new band hall was erected next to the vocational building and completed in 1968. Dedication of the new band hall occurred in 1967 with the naming of the new hall the “J. Francis Cox Band Hall” in honor of Yoe High School’s long-time band director and songwriter of the school song “On Yoe High”⁸ (McLeod, 1983). Students were “proud of our new Band Hall” calling it “quite an improvement over our old one” (Callaway, 1968, p. 2).



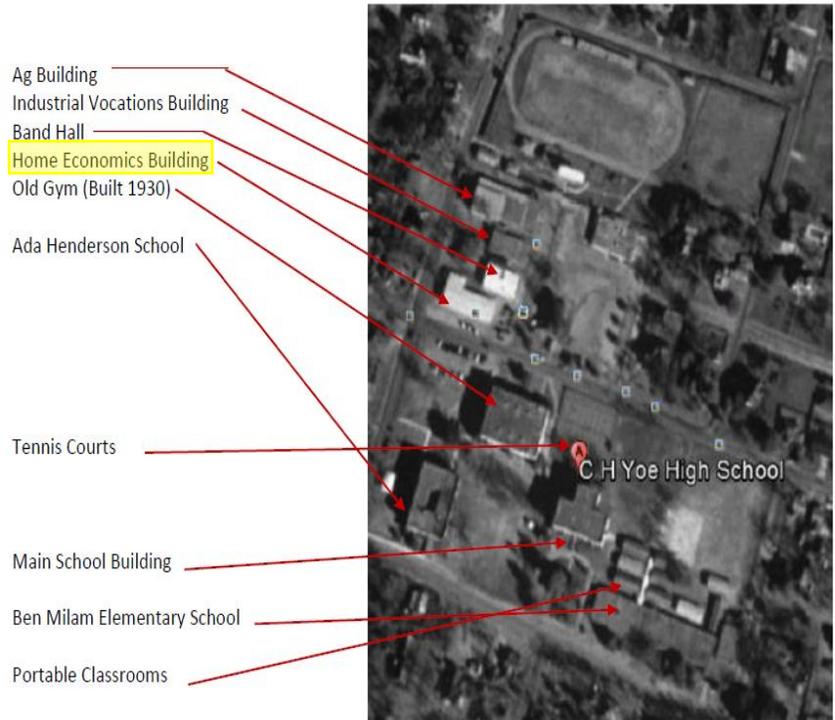
Source: *The Yoeman* (1968)



This picture was located in the 2016 band director’s office.

⁸ Mr. Cox wrote the music for the school song, “On Yoe High,” with the words being written by Portia Kruse, class of 1942 (McLeod, 1983). The song continued to be sung after each football game in 2016. Hanel (2016) believes that “more know the school song in Cameron than the state song....or national anthem!”

1970s. The homemaking department was moved from the gymnasium in December, 1970, to a new building that was erected next to the band hall. The building included a walk-up window that was used to sell sandwiches during lunch (Shuffield, 2016). The building shows in a 1996 image on Google Earth, but is no longer in existence.



The largest issue in the early 1970s was a \$1,250,000 bond issue. The school board had been planning renovations and improvements to the Yoe High Campus for two years with the aid of Bryan architect advisor, D. D. Mathews (For building new schools, 1972; Voter defeat bond, 1972). Plans for Yoe High School included remodeling of existing buildings at a cost of \$117,825 which included a forced air system, a corridor cut from the south entrance to the north entrance, one new classroom, two new offices, two new restrooms, a new media center and teachers’ lounge created from the science, biology, American history, and vocational education classrooms, and replacement of the old floors with carpeting for the library; three new science labs and three new classrooms, which would be air conditioned, were planned for the west side of the building for \$174,000 with relocation of lockers from inside the school to outside under covered walkways that would connect the new classrooms with the existing building; a new 12,250 square foot gym to be built north of Yoe High with an adjoining 7,000 square foot

fieldhouse costing \$360,000 with new showers installed in the old gym which would be used for girls physical education classes. An addition would also be built for the vocational agricultural department between two of the current buildings in order to meet state standards. An additional \$60,000 was planned for lab furniture and equipment and \$17,700 for classroom furniture and miscellaneous equipment. In addition, plans were in the works to put an exterior finish on all the schools (Bond issue awaits, 1972; Bond issue is, 1972; Bond issue proposals, 1972; Meeting to air, 1972).

An editorial in April congratulated the school board for making plans for the modernization of the school system. The editorial went on to say that the public was ready for new construction and new improvements in the CISD system:

The area is not only modernizing, it is beginning to flex its "growing" muscles...the CISD is gearing to go ahead with a building program that will really give the North Milam area a system worthy of AAA designation it now bears in athletics and interscholastic league competition (School expansion planned, 1972, p. 2).

In an effort to project “adequate information concerning the details of the Bond Election Program is made available to each citizen of the school district” and to explain “the pertinent facts of the program can be made available to all of the Cameron school patrons” (Trustees postpone, 1972, p. 1), the school board postponed the bond election and made preparations to give presentations and to display a model of the improvements at two banks and the public library (School model, 1972).



Source: *The Cameron Herald* (September 4, 1972) www.newspapers.com

The editor of *The Cameron Herald*, the Cameron Chamber of Commerce, and the Cameron PTA all voiced their approval of the bond issue (Trustees postpone, 1972). Several editorials were written before and after the election. Before the election, the editorials urged citizens to participate in the presentations and to view the model; however, the editorials carried a strong voice for modification of the plans to include an auditorium. One editorial specifically seemed to be addressing the board of trustees,

A forward looking school simply cannot ignore this basic need [an auditorium].

But failure to include an auditorium in a AAA school system with the prospect of solid growth in both interest and student size within the areas of vocal and instrumental music, drama and the dance is a mistake (Modified Gym, 1972, p. 2).

One editorial written before the election encouraged voters reminding them that it had been 17 years since the previous bond issue election and the second construction proposal since Cameron schools became public. The editorial called the community “spoiled” for having received the

Yoe’s gift and considered that the school trustees had been good stewards in keeping bonding programs to a minimum (School buildings modeled, 1972).

Despite the backing of the Chamber of Commerce, PTA, and the local newspaper, voters defeated the bond issue 598-441 (Voters defend bond, 1972). With the bond defeated, the school board looked for ways to lower the costs. For instance, the board looked at using steel for construction of new classrooms giving a reduction of approximately \$100,000. New plans included the construction of an addition to the agricultural building, new classrooms for Yoe High School which were to include labs, new furniture and equipment (including lab equipment) for the additional classrooms, a complete renovation of the restrooms at Yoe High, and construction of new physical education plant with a decrease of \$60,000 from the original plan. The new bond issue for \$885,000 went up for a vote in February 1973 but was defeated 316 for and 399 against (Cameron PTA votes, 1973).

The CISD budget for the 1973-1974 school year was \$1,119,509 which consisted mostly



of teacher salaries. In December, 1973, the school board met to discuss utility guidelines set forth by Governor Dolph Briscoe. The guidelines called for schools to find ways to save 15% of gas and electricity costs. One suggestion was to lower the schools’ thermostats. Superintendent Dr. R. Dodson

reminded the school board that three of the schools had steam heat which was either on or off. The energy plan that was submitted to the State included changing the school hours to 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. or 3:30 p.m., depending on Daylight Savings Time, during January, February, and

March which would shorten classes by 10 minutes; turning down the thermostats at the junior high school; turning lights off when not in use; and regulating the boilers to conserve heat (Local school build, 1973). Bids for a new boiler for Yoe High School were requested in 1975 due to limited insurance being available for the old boiler (Trustees vote repairs, 1975).

With the defeat of the February, 1973, bond issue and consultation with a new architect who found the current buildings inadequate for the school population (Calvin Cobb to head, 1973), the school board agreed to a five-year plan the superintendent referred to as “pay as you go” (CISD signs, 1973, p. 1). The plan called for renovations to be made as needed and as funds were available. For the 1973-1974 school year, plans called for remodeling of the restrooms, alleviating classrooms in east side of gym by building new science classrooms with room for laboratories, beginning construction of a new field house to be located on the northeast block north of Yoe campus. Funds for new equipment for the science rooms with plans and construction of a building to house the tax office and vocational building would be allocated in the 1974-1975 school year. Refurbishing and air conditioning of existing buildings and completing construction of tax office/vocational buildings was planned for the following year. Funds in the 1976-1977 school year would allow for the completion of air conditioning of all existing buildings and the plans and construction of a new physical education plant which would be completed the next year (CISD construction, 1973).

Property for the expansion of the agricultural building was purchased in March, 1973 (School trustees elect teachers, 1973). Remodeling of the restrooms at Yoe High School began in the summer of 1973 (CISD construction, 1973). Construction for a new fieldhouse was begun

in 1974⁹ (Trustees elect teachers, 1974). Preliminary plans for new science classrooms by architect John Allen were reviewed in May, 1974 (Board changes school name, 1974).

Equipment for the new science labs were ordered in April, 1974 (Trustees vote Cobb, 1974).

In January, 1975, the trustees were given an accreditation report. The report stated that there were no proper lab facilities for the biology classes that were housed in the gym. For the business education classes, there were not sufficient equipment for the Typing II classes or for other business courses being taught. The learning resource center (the library which had been moved to the auditorium) was inadequate for expansion of the collection and there was limited viewing and listening areas. The report also referred to the lack of dressing facilities; however, that issue was being remedied with the completion of the new fieldhouse (Accreditation Team Reports, 1975).

The gymnasium of Yoe High School was built in 1921. A new gym was included with the defeated bond issue elections of November, 1972, and February, 1973. An architect report found the existing gym relatively sound even though the walls were cracking in the classrooms. Funds for a new gym were not available; therefore, in 1975, the school board voted to make vast repairs to the existing gym (Trustees vote repairs, 1975). A feasibility report indicated the upper classrooms could be remodeled for use by science classes (science classes were to be housed in a new addition next to Yoe High School) with the lower classrooms used for health class. The plans for remodeling would include plumbing, new gas lines, work on drainage lines, heaters, partitions (the partitions on both the girls and boys sides were rotted), and new dressing area for

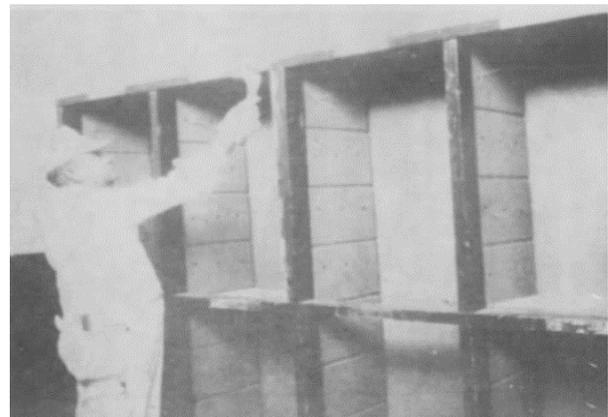
⁹ The new fieldhouse was considered a high need. Players would dress under the bleachers in the gymnasium. This area was referred to as “the dungeon” due to there being only one light. If the light went out, a replacement was put in two or three days later resulting in the players having to dress in the dark (Hanel, 2016).

the girls (Trustees vote repairs, 1975). The school board decided to act as its own contractor and hired Frank Matula as construction coordinator (Trustee hire Matula, 1975).

John Allen, architect, surveyed the gym. His plans for renovation of the gym included converting the upstairs classroom space to science labs, revamping the boys’ and girls’ shower and dressing areas, sealing and reinforcing the underside of the bleachers, providing a ventilation system for winter and summer exhaust, filling cement where foundation is exposed, and converting the east end of the gym to a concession stand, restrooms, and one classroom (Trustee hear proposed, 1975; Trustees OK gym, 1975). The school board accepted bids for the carpeting and tile work from Morgan Tile Company of Belton and from Epperson Electric of Cameron for the electrical, heating, and ventilation work (School trustees hear, 1975).

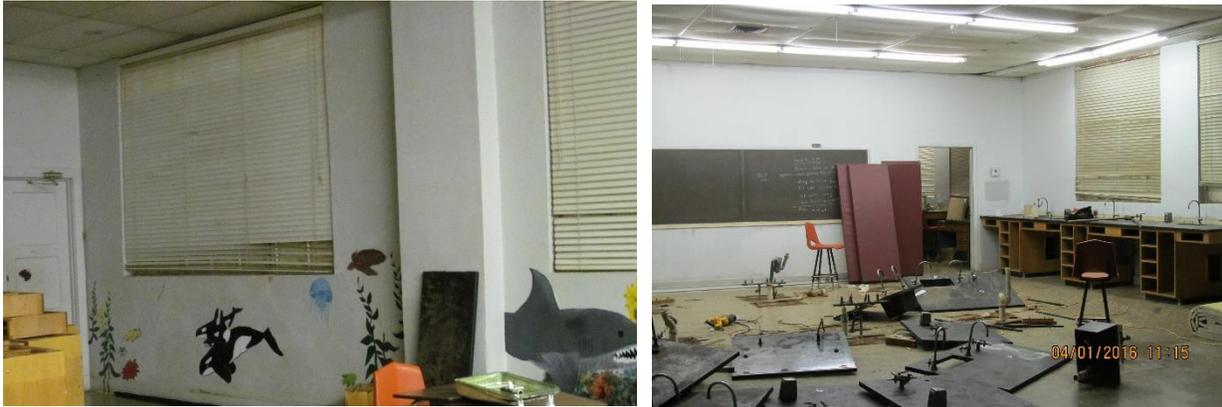
Work on the renovation of the gym soon began after the awarding of the bids. The school’s agricultural department readied the gym for construction by tearing out old fittings and partitions (School trustees hear, 1975). Work was performed repairing and replacing the base and studs that supported the bleachers in the gym due to termite and water damage (Gym takes on new, 1975). The walls were plastered (Holes in the wall, 1975), the floor repaired and varnished, and the ceiling was painted “for the first time in years” (Cameron school board meets, 1975, p.

1). The girls’ and boys’ locker rooms, located beneath both sides of the bleachers, were renovated with new lockers, new tile for the showers and new shower compartments, and an expansion of the girls’ area into a storage room. New restrooms were installed in the other hallway along with a concession stand. Where the



Source: *The Cameron Herald* (1975)

band hall was once housed in the upstairs part of the gym, a new science area was placed with a 3,000 square foot laboratory (Gym takes on new, 1975). Venetian blinds were installed in 1976 (Five-year plan, 1976).



Fire safety was an issue for CISD. A fire completely destroyed the new construction of Cam-Hi in 1891. Mrs. Yoe specified in her will that school should be insured against fire (Yoe, 1919, p. 2). *Cameron Enterprise* described the Yoe High School as a “three-story fireproof structure” with a fire escape (Description of building, 1921). After 56 years, a report from the city fire inspector, Tommy Chamberlain from stated that the schools “were in real good shape” (School trustees hear fire, 1978, p. 1). The report indicated that the schools were complying with the state fire safety rules. Recommendations from the report included more storage as the boiler room at Yoe High School was being used as a storage room, a fire escape for the second floor classrooms at the gym, and fire prevention and drills be incorporated into the curriculum (School trustees hear fire, 1978).

By the end of the 1977-1978 school year, there were nine buildings on the Yoe High School campus which were “jammed onto 9 blocks” (*The Yoeman*, 1978). Yoe High school employed 30 teachers and had a student population of 525 who “crowded into the 57-year-old

building with its 15 classrooms and narrow halls, but ‘this crowding makes us closer’” (This is Yoeland, 1978).

The summer of 1978 brought more needed improvements to Yoe High School. Before the beginning of the new school year, ceramic tile was installed in the entrance ways, the interior of the building and the lockers received a new paint job which the 1979 yearbook described as having converted the “lifeless plaster into brilliantly colored walls” (*The Yoeman*, 1979), the offices were paneled, and a new darkroom for the annual staff was built (Trustees set school tax, 1978). Also new to the school was the new Yoe spirit symbol which was built into the entrance hallway (Yoe spirit, 1978).



Source: *The Cameron Herald*
(1978, September 10)



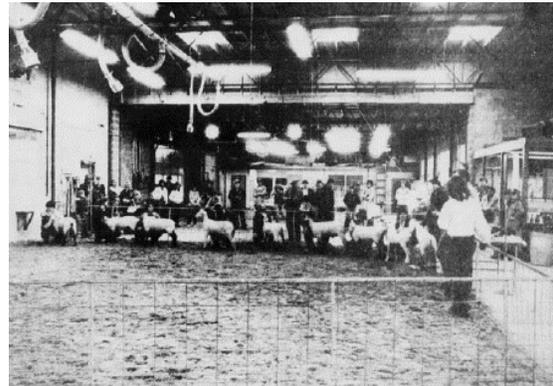
In 1978, the school board discussed a new media center. The media center was where the district housed its cassette tapes, projectors, and mimeograph machines¹⁰ (Hanel, 2016). The superintendent was given permission to request bids for a metal building that would be air conditioned and contain 1700 square feet of space. The building was initially to be placed

¹⁰ Mimeograph, or stencil duplicator, machines were used in schools between the 1950s and the 1970s. The creator of the mimeograph copying system was Thomas Edison. Alfred Blake Dick licensed Edison’s creation and invented the mimeo stencil. A stencil is created (by writing or typing) and then clamped around a cylinder that rotates, forcing ink on the stencil which is then transferred to paper. The copies (also known as “dittos”) came out wet and limp with a glue-like smell (Santosus, 2001).

between the gym and the high school south of the tennis courts but was placed on the site of the old media center which was sold. The new building was completed in September, 1978, and was used as the media center and storage for lunchroom supplies (Schools to build, 1978; Trustee set school tax, 1978).

1980s. The landscape of Yoe Campus included portable classrooms. In 1976, portable classrooms were placed on campus for use by the elementary school. In 1980, two more portable classrooms were placed on campus for use by the high school. These classrooms were used for a new career oriented program that was set up by Manpower Office and Training Services (Trustees weight Dulin, 1980).

Also adding to the landscape was the completion of the addition to the agricultural building. The completion was celebrated with an open house and preview of their show animals (Open house, 1980).



Source: *The Cameron Herald*. (1980, January 10)

Other improvements that were made in the first half of the 1980s included renovation of the J. Francis Cox Band Hall in 1982. A bid of \$21,766 was accepted from 3-E Corporation out of Temple, Texas. The renovations included \$1,876 for recessed lighting (Band hall due improvements, 1982). The end of the summer of 1982 saw a new fence around some parts of the campus, new furniture, and a new entrance to Yoe field (Band hall due improvements, 1982).

Space continued to be an issue for CISD. However, a study conducted by Texas A&M University and the University of Texas indicated there was no significant school growth; therefore, the existing structures were adequate. The steering committee in charge of the study

recommended the district contract with St. Anthony’s Catholic School for space. Other recommendations were to move the administration offices to the Oxsheer Smith¹¹ house (obtained by the district in 1968) and securing land away from the school for a new athletic field. If a new athletic field was built the existing fieldhouse could be used for vocational training courses such as plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and automotive with an auditorium being built on the existing athletic field (CISD approves contracts, 1982).

A new computer lab was established in 1983. Radio Shack’s bid of \$16,521 was accepted as the low bidder. The bid included one host computer, three stand-alone computers, six student terminals, and three printers. The lab would contain the main computer and six terminals. An additional computer was placed in



Source: *The Cameron Herald* (1983)

the business department (CISD buys computer, 1983). The principal, Luther Flinn, arranged for every student to spend time in the computer lab within a 24-week period. Eighteen teachers received computer training from Joe White, local computer dealer (Computers in the classroom, 1983).

The second half to the 1980s saw the outside of the school’s physical appearance change. In 1985, the school board heard a report regarding the schools’ energy conservation. Stanley Campbell, representative



Source: *The Yoeman* (1986)

¹¹ Oxsheer Smith was a native of Milam County. He had attended Cameron schools. Smith was president of Citizens National Bank from 1915 until 1969 (School accepts Smith, 1968; Williams, 2011).

from Powermaster in San Antonio, Texas, reported that the schools could be air conditioned and energy conservation measures added at a cost of \$119,930 with Yoe High School’s cost totaling \$92,868 (Boards hears feasibility study, 1985). Conduit was run to each classroom to provide electricity of window air conditioning units. As an energy conservation move, the air conditioning was run from a central location which pre-set each individual unit’s thermostat between 76 and 78 degrees (School construction well underway, 1985). The window air conditioning units were in place by the first day of school. Morale on the first day was said to have been high due to the cooler classrooms (Cool rooms greet, 1985).

The media center received another renovation in 1985. W. A. W. Construction Company of Cameron was awarded the construction contract with a bid of \$72,844.51. Renovations to the media center included alterations to the existing media center building to house administrative offices and an addition of a board room. Media services were moved to Ben Milam Elementary School and media equipment was moved to each school building (School construction, 1985; Trustees accept, 1985).

1990s. Little documentation was located regarding improvements and changes in the last decade of the twentieth century. Observations between the 1994 and 1995 yearbooks indicated that dry erase boards were placed over the chalkboards in the 1994-1995 school year. The principal, Luther Flinn, started a “cantina” in the location of the theater arts department in 1997 (Stork, 2016). Internet was added to the computer lab and library so that students could connect to the World Wide Web (*The Yoeman*, 1998).



2000s. A new gym was built in 2000 (Stork, 2016). The existing gym continued to be used for physical education classes and girls practice facilities. Four fans were used in the old gym during the practices (Reed, 2016).

In 2001, the school board sought the approval of a \$7 million bond issue. This bond issue was for a 49,000 square foot high school. The cost of renovating the Yoe High School main building had become much higher than the cost of a new building. The high school is overcrowded and inadequate plus all utilities needed to be updated (Williams, 2001a). The plans included demolition of Ada Henderson School¹², the renovation of Ben Milam Elementary School for high school educational programs, and the use of the existing Yoe High School for educational programs (Williams, 2001b). The new high school would include a library, classrooms, cafeteria, science and homemaking labs, and theater arts and journalism departments. Other improvements would consist of covered walkways to connect the buildings, off-street areas for pickup and drop-off, and the renovation of the Ben Milam cafeteria into a band hall (Williams, 2001c). The vote for the bond issue ended in a tie which is believed to be the first time a bond issue ended in a tie in the state of Texas (Williams, 2002b; Williams, 2002f).

Some of the concerns regarding the construction program were the plans for the buildings on the campus (Ada Henderson, Ben Milam, the homemaking building, the band hall, and Yoe High School) (Williams, 2001b). A “totally different” construction plan was drafted for the 2002 bond issue from “a year ago” (Williams, 2002a). The administration voiced concern for the students’ safety if a new building was not built (Williams, 2002a).

¹² New elementary and intermediate schools were built in the 1990s (Williams, 2001b).

The new construction plan called for \$14 million - \$17 million in building upgrades, a 1,000 seat auditorium, new band hall and choir room, and renovation of the old Ben Milam Elementary School as well as new classrooms. The new school would accommodate between 750-800 students (Williams, 2002a). A \$4 million Texas Education Agency (TEA) instructional facilities allocation fund was waiting to be awarded to CISD if the new bond issue was accepted (Williams, 2002a). The Cameron Industrial Foundation endorsed the new construction plan. Prominent alumni of Yoe High School also lent support to the bond issue by agreeing to co-chair a committee to raise additional funds for facilities not covered by the bond (Williams, 2002e).

The \$15 million bond issue was approved 793 to 682. Because of the approval, CISD received \$4 million in TEA instructional facilities allocation funds. Four prominent alumni, Wayne Fisher, Michael Perrin, Mark Humble, and Drayton McLane Jr. began fundraising to collect additional funds for facilities not covered by the bond (Williams, 2002d). One facility that was paid for by this fundraising was the Performing Arts Center which was built on the location of the Ada Henderson Building and opened in 2005 (Hanel, 2016; Schiller, 2016; Shuffield, 2016).

EBCO Commercial of Cameron was chosen as the construction manager for the project. The project architect was Jim Booher with BMA Architects of Duncanville, Texas. Construction began during the winter of 2003 (Foster, 2002) with completion in time for the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year (Williams, 2004).

The new building was built right next to the existing Yoe High School, literally. Evidence can be seen through the windows of the upper level of the auditorium. The gymnasium

is still in use and has been incorporated into the new building as evidenced by the thick entrance to the lobby of the new building. The upstairs classrooms were being renovated for use by the



wrestling team. The outside of the building received a facade to match the new building. The old Ben Milam Elementary (sometimes referred to as “Old Milam” or “the Ben Milam Annex”)



was also incorporated into the new building with offices and classrooms (Stork, 2016). The first Yoe High School continued to be used for

Entrance to old Ben Milam Elementary School. A different subway tile was used in the new building.

educational programs, such as alternative school, until 2014 (Stork, 2016).



Mr. Brian Stork, Assistant Principal, Yoe High School, demonstrates evidence that this part of the building was an elementary school.

Traditions

This report has been about the building of Yoe High School; however, the people who inhabit the building are what makes the building a school. Any history of Yoe High School would be remiss if it did not include the traditions that the students, faculty, and administration hold dear.

Yoe Day. Mrs. Yoe placed in her will the desire for students to place flowers on the grave of her husband and that classes be suspended for the day that the ceremony occurs (Yoe, 1919). Since 1921, classes at Yoe High School have been suspended on the second Thursday of May. Students from all of the Cameron schools meet at Yoe High School and process to Oak Hill Cemetery (Hanel, 2016; Stork, 2016). The ceremony consists of a prayer, a welcome, the



Source: *The Yoeman* (2002)

reading of Mrs. Yoe’s will followed by the laying of flowers on the graves of Laura, Carolyn, and C. H. Yoe. The representatives from Ben Milam Elementary and Cameron Elementary Schools lay flowers on Laura Yoe’s grave. Representatives

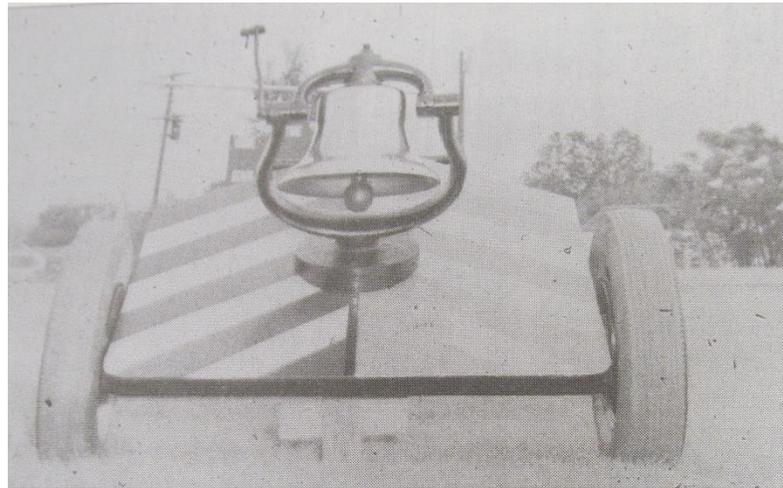
from Cameron Junior High School lay flowers on Carolyn Yoe’s grave with flowers laid on C. H. Yoe’s grave by representatives from Yoe High School. The ceremony concludes with the playing of taps by a trio of coronet players from Yoe High Marching Band (Stork, 2016).



Source: *The Yoeman* (1988)

Battle of the Bell. The Yoe High School vs. Rockdale High School rivalry is considered one of the top high school football rivalries in the United States (Hanel, 2016). An enticement for the continued rivalry is a brass bell which was given by Sandow and Southern Railroad in 1954 (Bell battle rich, 2004). Students from each school guard the bell during the football game. The victor of the football game retains access to the bell for the year.

The bell has been thrown into the Little River more than once (Hanel, 2016). When the bell became cracked through years of use and could no longer be rung, Catherine Thomas, an alumnus of Yoe High School, donated a new bell which was



Source: *The Cameron Herald* (2004)

very similar to the original. The bell is mounted on a two-wheel trailer. The board is painted or repainted with the school colors of the school that has possession (Battle of the what, 2004).

Mascot. The mascot of Yoe High School is the Yoeman, named for the Yoes, and is depicted by an archer of the early British era, “dressed in a Robin Hood type costume” (Buck, 2016). The first indication that any athletic team was called Yoemen is in the 1923 yearbook.



(The 1922 yearbook showed the baseball team as the Comets.) The earliest artifact showing the Yoeman as an archer can be found on a 1936 Yoe High ring. The Yoe High mascot was named one of the top 30 best high school mascots in Texas (Robinson, 2016).

Epilogue

The Yoes had a dream to provide an education for the children of Cameron, Texas. Their gift has reached farther than they probably imagined. For 83 years, students walked the halls of the three-story structure known as C. H. Yoe High School. During the research of this paper, many stories about student life were uncovered as well as information about the courses that were offered over the years.

Although Mrs. Yoe provided for upkeep of the buildings and grounds in her will (Yoe, 1919), that provision was not enough as the years continued. Much information has been uncovered regarding the money that has been needed to continue the upkeep and renovations of the school system, an aspect of Yoe High School history that would be interesting to see how much it has changed.

While touring old Yoe High School, one of the classrooms contained the trophies earned from previous years' academic and athletic competitions. The trophies took up a majority of the classroom. Sorting through the trophies is a project that has already been started (Stork, 2016). What is the story behind all those trophies? The athletic program has a long and rewarding history that should certainly be documented in detail. Many organizations have a long history (e.g. Future Farmers of America) that need to have their histories documented as well.

History is not finite. As such, the history of Yoe High School is not complete. Recommendations for recording the continuing history of the high school are in order. Students should interview previous alumni about student life. (I had the opportunity to talk to a member of

the class of 1953 but am unsure if there are alumni still living from earlier classes.) As time continues, the history of the past will fade unless captured by those living today.

The “magnificent gift” must continue to be given.

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Thank you!

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