

HISTORY OF B. B. OWEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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The property where B. B. Owens Elementary School is located was donated to the Lewisville Independent School District (LISD) by the B. B. Owen Trust to be used for a school site.ⁱ At that time the 50-acre property was in the extra-territorial jurisdiction of Frisco. The property was annexed into The Colony in a boundary adjustment agreement with Frisco in 1986.ⁱⁱ LISD used 30-acres of the property for B. B. Owen Elementary School that opened in 1986 and traded the remaining 20-acres to The Colony in 1984 that was used to build B. B. Owen Park.ⁱⁱⁱ

The school is named in memory of successful Dallas businessman Bennie Bryan (B. B.) Owen (1897-1972). Owen was born September 11, 1897 in Cisco, Eastland, County, TX and was the youngest of five children.^{iv} His parents, Almus Owen and Laura Ann Brock, were both born in Weakley County, Tennessee. They moved to Texas about ten years before B.B.'s birth and his father was a dentist.^v According to a niece he was a real character and married MANY times but never had any children.^{vi} Even though he didn't have any children it does appear he had an interest in youth activities as he received an honorary award from the Frisco Future Farmers of America Chapter in 1970.^{vii}

Owen moved to Dallas as a young man. He was a World War I Army veteran where he served as a Major in the Aviation Section of the Army Signal Corps and piloted the OXS aircraft. He also was one of the nation's first airmail pilots. After the war he returned to Dallas where he owned and operated a Ford and Lincoln dealership. Later he entered the ranching and investment business and developed large tracts of land in Dallas and Collin Counties. He was a resident of Frisco at the time of his death on April 24, 1972. He is entombed at the Sparkman/Hillcrest Cemetery in Dallas.^{viii}

Owen was a former director of the Republic National Bank of Dallas, a director of the First National Bank of Garland for 34 years and served as the chairman of the aviation committee of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce that secured establishment of the Dallas Naval Air Station. He was also a 32nd Degree Mason, a member of the Hella Temple Shrine and an active supporter of the Scottish Rite Children's Hospital in Dallas.^{ix}

In addition to the LISD donation, Owens' Trust supported two other significant projects in the Metroplex. In 1977 a five-story hospital located in Richardson, TX was built and named the B. B. Owen Memorial Hospital, now part of the Methodist/Richardson Medical Center, in memory of Owen.^x Owen's name

remains on the building and the lobby contains a plaque recognizing his generosity. The Owen Trust also donated land for a 27-acre park in Dallas at Plano Road and Walnut Hill Lane. The park, also named B. B. Owen Park, was dedicated in 1978. ^{xi}

The motive for The Colony to annex the Owen land arose in 1981 when LISD proposed to build a high school for students living in The Colony, Eastvale and Carrollton. LISD proposed to build the high school on 50-acres of land that had been donated to LISD by the estate of B. B. Owen. The land was located within the extra-territorial jurisdiction of Frisco, on the border between The Colony and Frisco. However the property did not have basic services such as water, sewer, police and fire protection. Because Frisco at the time could not provide these services, LISD proposed that The Colony Municipal Utility District (MUD) annex the land so it could provide water/sewer services and Frisco annex the property and enter into an agreement with The Colony to provide fire and police services. ^{xii}

Frisco, The Colony and MUD all had problems with the LISD plan. Frisco did not want MUD to annex land in their city limits. MUD was reluctant to annex land outside the city limits of The Colony. The Colony was not interested in providing services outside its city limits. The Colony was also concerned the property was not the best location for a high school, citing projected increased street traffic, the costs to the city of widening Taylor Street and construction costs MUD customers would incur for additional utilities. The city proposed an alternative site at Office Creek Park, located at the southwestern corner of Blair Oaks Drive and Arbor Glen Road, in the southwestern part of the city that would be more centrally located for the future growth of The Colony and North Carrollton. LISD's position remained unchanged saying that not using their donated land would increase the cost of the project.

During negotiations in 1981 and 1982 with the involved jurisdictions, LISD reconsidered part of its plan and requested The Colony annex the property instead of Frisco. The Colony annexed the property ^{xiii} and Frisco's city council voted to sue The Colony to protect its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Meanwhile The Colony MUD was delaying making a decision while it waited for the Texas Public Utilities Commission to process an application requesting permission for MUD to serve an extensive area of Frisco's ETJ. ^{xivxv}

In October 1982 it appeared some progress was being made on a high school site. The Colony discussed an agreement to abandon an existing road west of Main Street, Stewart Creek Road, and trade the property to F&J for 27.5 acres of land adjacent to Office Creek Park. The council's hope was this property, when added to the Office Creek property, would make the location more attractive to LISD. ^{xvi} It was also reported that LISD was conducting a feasibility study on the Office Creek site. ^{xvii} However the LISD Board voted to reject the Office Creek site due to the high cost of installing streets and utilities. ^{xviii}

Even though LISD had voted against the Office Creek Park site LISD continued behind the scene negotiations with The Colony and Fox & Jacobs (F&J). The first

public report of the negotiations appeared in the July 1983 MUD minutes that F&J had been discussing selling property by Office Creek Park to LISD.^{xix} The Office Creek site was also discussed at a July 1983 city council meeting.^{xx} The proposed agreement had LISD acquiring approximately 45 acres of land from The Colony and F&J. The Colony would either sell or trade Office Creek Park's 14.7 acres to LISD and F&J would sell LISD the remaining land for half price.^{xxi} The cost of F&J's property would also include the cost of constructing water and sewer utilities.^{xxii}

Before the deal could be finalized there were two more hurdles to overcome. First because Office Creek Park had been purchased with city bond funds to be a park, state law required The Colony obtain voter approval to sell or trade the property. An election was held in November 1983. Voters approved the sale or trade by a vote of 1019 to 40.^{xxiii} The Colony's part of the deal was completed in 1984 when The Colony traded Office Creek Park to LISD for 20 acres of the B. B. Owen property that would be used for a new city park.^{xxiv}

The final step to close the deal was Frisco and The Colony needed to resolve the legality of The Colony's annexation of the B. B. Owen property. The issue was resolved in The Colony's favor when the cities signed a 1986 boundary adjustment agreement wherein Frisco agreed to relinquish its extra territorial jurisdiction to the Owen property.^{xxv}

The original land grant owner for the B.B. Owen Elementary School property is Memucan Hunt. Hunt was born August 7, 1807 in North Carolina. In 1834 he moved to Mississippi to take charge of a plantation given to him by his father. Early in 1836 Thomas Jefferson Green, representing the Republic of Texas, recruited Hunt and several hundred others to come to Texas and join the Texas Revolution. In August 1836 David G. Burnett, President of the Texas Republic, in anticipation of a threatened invasion by Mexico, commissioned Hunt a Brigadier General in the Texas Army. Hunt at his own personal expense enlisted, organized and equipped troops for the Texas Army from Tennessee, North Carolina and Mississippi. In December of 1836, with the threat of the invasion over, Hunt resigned his commission and returned to Mississippi. He was later persuaded by President Sam Houston to return to Texas and serve as Minister to the United States where he assisted William H. Wharton in gaining United States Recognition of Texas Independence.

He later served the Republic as the Secretary of the Navy from December 1838 to May 1839, Texas Representative on the United States - Boundary Commission in 1839, Inspector General of the Texas Army and Adjutant General in the Somervell Expedition in 1842. In 1846 he volunteered to serve in the Mexican War and served briefly on the staff of General James Pinckney Henderson. After annexation he served one term in the Texas legislature in 1852. In 1853 he represented Texas once again as representative on the United States Boundary Commission.

He spent the next several years trying to recoup his losses in behalf of Texas, and the legislature overwhelmingly approved his claims for compensation in land. On January 28, 1850 he was issued a land script for 320 acres.

He also obtained a charter for a railroad from Galveston to the Red River and traveled extensively in search of investors. It was on one such trip that he was taken ill in New Orleans and forced to return to Galveston. Advised by his doctor to go to a higher altitude, he went to his brother's home in Tipton County, Tennessee. It was there that he died on June 5, 1856.

Hunt was married to Anne Taliaferro Howard of Galveston in 1850. Hunt County was named in his honor. ^{xxvi}

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- ⁱ "School plans outlined", The Colony Courier, May 13, 1982.
 - ⁱⁱ Denton County Clerks Office, Doc # 37026, Boundary Adjustment Agreement, 4/14/1986, Vol 1918, Page 674.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Denton County Clerk Office, Warranty Deed, 09/25/1984, Book RP/Vol. 1491/Pg. 978.
 - ^{iv} Bryon Owen in the 1900 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com, accessed February 2, 2017.
 - ^v Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Certificate of Birth, Eastland County, Texas, April 22, 1942
 - ^{vi} Message Board post Bonnie M Reeves (niece and daughter of Owen's oldest sister Ina Owen Reeves), Search Historical Newspapers, Accessed by Lesa Haney February 24, 2001
 - ^{vii} Frisco's FFA Hold Banquet, McKinney Courier - Gazette, March 3, 1970.
 - ^{viii} State of Texas Certificate of Death, Dallas County, Registrar's File No. 3128, April 26, 1972.
 - ^{ix} Obituary B. B. Owen, Dallas Morning News, 1972.
 - ^x "Richardson Medical Center, B.B. Owen Memorial Hospital, Richardson, Texas", The Portal to Texas History, Accessed April 26, 2016.
 - ^{xi} Dallas Parks and Recreation website. October 18, 2016.
 - ^{xii} "Outlooks differ on school sites", The Colony Courier, June 24, 1982.
 - ^{xiii} "Council okays annexation". The Colony Courier, September 30, 1982.
 - ^{xiv} "Delay annexing school tract, residents urge", The Colony Courier, September 16, 1982.
 - ^{xv} "Frisco presses ahead to block annexation", The Colony Courier, October 14, 1982.
 - ^{xvi} "City presses for high school site change." The Colony Courier, October 7, 1982.
 - ^{xvii} "Frisco presses ahead to block annexation", The Colony Courier, October 14, 1982.
 - ^{xviii} "Colony battles but loses fight on school site", The Colony Courier, December 30, 1982.
 - ^{xix} The Colony Municipal Utility District Minutes, July 21, 1983
 - ^{xx} "Councilmen optimistic on Office Creek site", The Colony Courier, July 28, 1983.

^{xxi} "Mayor remains optimistic on site for school", The Colony Courier, September 8, 1983.

^{xxii} Municipal Utility District Minutes, July 21, 1987.

^{xxiii} "Voters favor Office Creek for high school", The Colony Courier, November 10, 1983.

^{xxiv} Denton County Clerk Office, Doc # 51536, Warranty Deed, September 25, 1984, Vol 1491, Page 978.

^{xxv} Denton County Clerk Office, Boundary Adjustment Agreement, 4/14/1986, Vol. 1918/Pg 674.

^{xxvi} Memucan Hunt: An Inventory of Papers at the Texas State Archives, 1836-1846, Library of Texas, Ancestry.com Accessed February 7, 2008.