
THE PINE LEAF

Vol. I No. 1 Published for the Parents by the Pupils of the Diboll Public Schools November 15, 1927

ABOVE:
The masthead from the first issue of The Pine Leaf, November 15, 1927.

A 1920s Diboll Student Newspaper Full of Interesting Social History

By Jonathan Gerland

Among the newspaper holdings at the Archives are several issues of The Pine Leaf from 1927 and 1928. This Diboll student publication, apparently a local response to a deepening national interest in parent-teacher associations, was published every two weeks by the senior class for the parents of Diboll students.

"The purpose of the paper," said its editors, was "not to make money, but to help the school by keeping the parents and the town in general informed as to what the school is accomplishing and enlisting their cooperation in its plans." Annual subscriptions were 15 cents for pupils, 25 cents for "town people," and 35 cents for anyone living outside Diboll. Among the earliest subscribers were T.L.L. and H.G. Temple.

Today, more than seventy years later, the papers are an excellent source of Diboll social history.

First graders were "coming to school clean" in January 1928, according to the paper. Students "were given a sample bar of Palmolive soap each, and also little health booklets." First graders were also encouraged to attend Sunday School regularly. Pupils who attended Sunday School, reported The Pine Leaf, delighted at seeing their names written on the chalk-board each Monday morning in colored chalk.

Diboll school children certainly did their part in a March 1928 county-wide "rat killing contest." Prizes were awarded for killing the most rats. During just the first week, seven Diboll boys killed 342 of the dreaded varmints. Cleveland Waltman set the pace the first week by killing 121, earning him the coveted title "Chief Pied Piper of the Diboll Schools."

In the fall of 1927, the first year Spanish Class organized a Spanish Club, whose motto was La Que Bien Aprende No Se Obvedo- "What is well learned is not easily forgotten." Monthly dues were ten cents, but an additional ten cent "tax" was assessed if a member missed a semi-monthly meeting. The club had 26 charter members. Officers included Sheldon Bateman, president; Vivian Weeks, vice president; Bertha Weisinger, secretary-treasurer; Zada Miles, reporter; and Macbeth Warner, assistant reporter.

In sports news, the Diboll high school basketball team beat Corrigan 21 to 2 in a wild game on November 4, 1927. A couple months later, Diboll beat Lufkin twice 21 to 20 and 29 to 8 in back to back games on January 11, 1928. The first game was played in Lufkin, followed by the second on the Diboll court.

The March 21, 1928 issue reported that practice was going well for the baseball team. Edwin Nelson was showing up everyday "and putting in some hard work." Bill Agee was rec-

ognized as "one of the outstanding catchers in all East Texas."

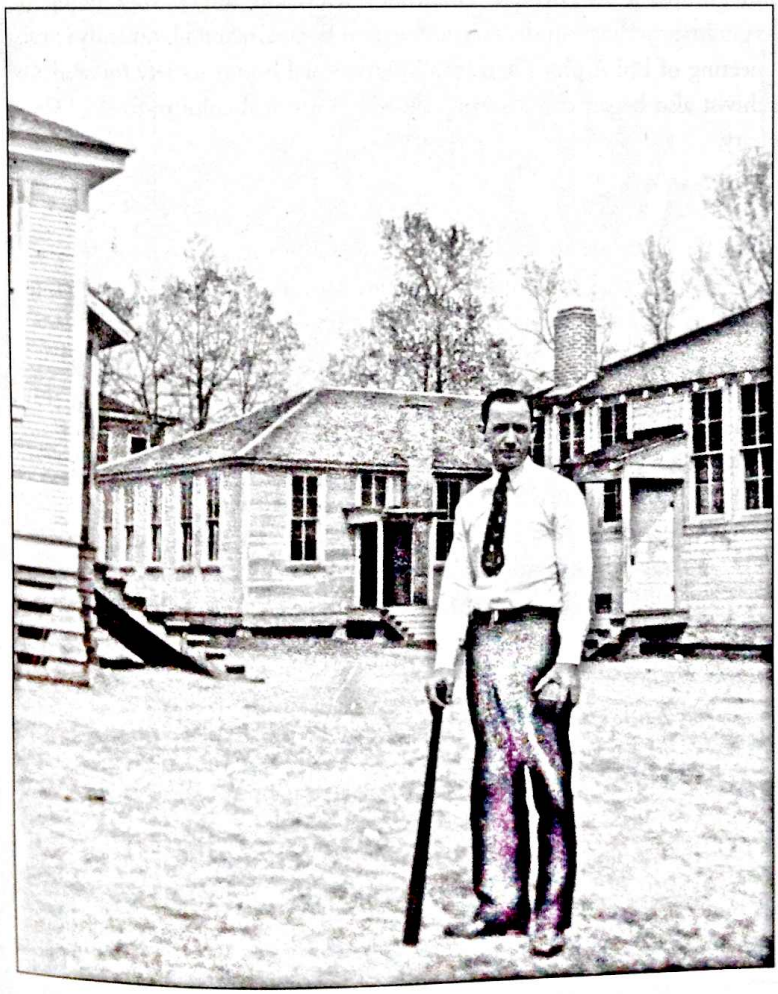
Although the Pine Leaf was generally lighthearted, it did have a serious side on occasion. Some unidentified boys were admonished in the January 18, 1928 issue for being careless with fireworks over the Christmas break. Their reckless fun resulted in the burning of the high school water tank.

But perhaps the most serious article came from E.C. Durham, secretary of the school board of trustees and superintendent of the Texas Southeastern Railroad. Durham wrote a relatively lengthy letter in the March 21, 1928 issue, counseling Diboll parents to become more actively involved in their sons' education and well being.

To Durham, the real "question" of the 1920s for which all society was being pressed for an answer was "What will we make of our boys?" Should they be allowed the "pastimes of the highway, the false fellowship of the liquor bottle, the excitement of the crap game, or the enervating effect of plain loafing?" Durham believed the only alternative to such ruin was through physical exercise and the community's encouragement of "clean athletic contests," where young boys' active minds would be suitably "employed."

"Every citizen should visit the athletic field and observe the boys at play," Durham said. "The young bodies developing reserves of strength for emergencies of later life, the grace of movement, the fine coordination of mind and body, the spirit of teamwork, the love of fair play, the respect for order, the resourcefulness, self-reliance, enthusiasm, and hopefulness are plainly to be seen and will inspire confidence in the worth of our boys and faith in their future." Durham asked that everyone give of their "time and money in order that we and those who follow us may one day realize our most priceless asset - our boys."

If anyone knows the location of any other Pine Leaf newspapers or others like it, please call the Archives at 829-3543.



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LEFT: Diboll School Superintendent C.H. "Bear" Miller with baseball and bat, ca. 1927.