



#11: The Woodward School at Moonshine Hill

The Moonshine Hill School. Was there ever such a thing, or is it just a rumor from Humble's past? Well, this one is not a rumor...it's true. There actually was a school located at Moonshine Hill, and it had an interesting history.

The Woodward School, located at Moonshine Hill, originally opened as a two-room wooden schoolhouse in the summer of 1910 by Harris County Common School District No. 35. District 35 was one of the two early school districts in our area. The school was named for Emerson Francis Woodward, the Assistant Superintendent for the Producers Oil Company's southern division. Mr. Woodward was also the founder of the Houston Gun Club and was once listed as Houston's richest resident. His brother, William Zane Woodward, served on school boards for District No. 28 and District No. 50. The land for the school was donated by the Producers Oil Company, and the donation was approved by Mr. Woodward. The Woodward School was a ward school, which served students in grades 1-7.

Back then, the boundary between the District 28 and District 35 had been designated using words such as "a stake in the ground" or by an "X carved in a pine tree." Over the years, the location of the "stake in the ground" or the "tree with the X" could no longer be found. By 1914, it was determined that the Woodward School had actually been built within the boundaries for District No. 28, not within the boundaries of District No. 35. During the summer of 1914, the Harris County Commissioners Court transferred ownership of the school to District No. 28. This transfer included the land, the building, the teachers, and the students.

When District No. 28 took over operation of the school, the district just referred to it as the Hill School (since it was located at Moonshine Hill). In the summer of 1918, the old wooden schoolhouse was replaced by a new masonry building, which was designed by future Houston Mayor Oscar F. Holcombe (at the same time, he designed and built the new Humble High School on Higgins Street). The old wooden Woodward School building was moved across the tracks to Bordersville, and was used as an additional building for the Colored School. By the way, in 1918 District No. 35 was merged with District 28 and became a new District (District No. 50). A few months later, District No. 50 became the Humble Independent School District.

The Humble ISD School Board decided to close the Hill School in 1931 due to low enrollment. But, a lot of angry Moonshine Hill residents protested the decision. The School Board decided to keep the Hill School open. Long-time Humble ISD administrator Jack Daniels served as the last Principal of the Hill School (so yes...we had a Jack Daniels who served as Principal of the Moonshine Hill School). The following year (1932), the School Board closed the Hill School for good. The remaining students were transferred to Humble Elementary on Higgins Street.