

THE FIRST BUILDING OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

The land upon which the first building of the Texas Woman's University is situated is a tract, originally of 70 acres, given by the citizens of Denton to the State of Texas. It was offered as an inducement for the location in Denton of the newly authorized Girls' Industrial Institute and College, a fact reflected in the proviso contained in each of the deeds for the property to the State: ". . . and a further consideration for this deed is the establishment in the City of Denton, Texas, the Texas Industrial Institute and College . . . ." The land has been the property of the State since 1902.

The original B.B.B. and C.R.R. Co. Survey was a 640-acre tract, and it was on a portion of this land that the new school's initial building was constructed. Owners of this land prior to the State of Texas were: /

1. John R. Henry, assignee of the Brazos, Buffalo Bayou and Colorado Railroad Company, by land scrip No. 111, issued by the Commissioner of the General Land Office September 23, 1853, transferred to Henry April 12, 1854. Patent signed by Governor Pease October 9, 1857, and filed Vol. A, p. 156, Patent Records of Denton County, October 19, 1857.
2. J. B. Sawyer, by deed from Otis G. Welch, agent and attorney in fact for John R. Henry, July 1, 1869. Recorded Vol. J, p. 432, Denton County.

3. L. F. Holcomb, by deed from J. B. Sawyer et ux C. E. Sawyer, March 11, 1885. Book 29, page 389, Records of Deeds, Denton County.
4. Stephen A. Holcomb, deeded from L. F. Holcomb, August 24, 1886. Book 30, p. 108, Records of Deeds.
5. R. J. Wilson, by deed from S. A. Holcomb and wife, Ida Holcomb, May 9, 1887. Book 30, p. 444, Denton County Deed Records.
6. Laura E. F. Clayton, by deed from R. J. and H. D. A. Wilson, July 4, 1888. Book 30, page 616.
7. S. L. Ganow, by deed from Laura E. F. Clayton, July 20, 1888. Book 35, p. 257.
8. T. A. Collins, by deed from S. L. Ganow, July 13, 1888. Book 35, p. 259. (Date inconsistency is on the face of the deed record.)
9. The State of Texas, by deed from T. A. Collins and wife, Annie Collins, February 25, 1902. Book 81, p. 420.

The choice of the location was made by a special commission, appointed by the Governor as required by statute. Governor Joseph B. Sayers, following provision in the law creating the college, appointed a commission comprised of one member from each of the State's thirteen congressional districts to select a location for the newly-authorized college. Fourteen cities extended invitations for the college, and these were all duly visited by the commission members. On February 3-5, 1902, the group met in Austin to make its decision. On the seventy-sixth ballot, it selected Denton<sup>1</sup> as best fulfilling the statutory

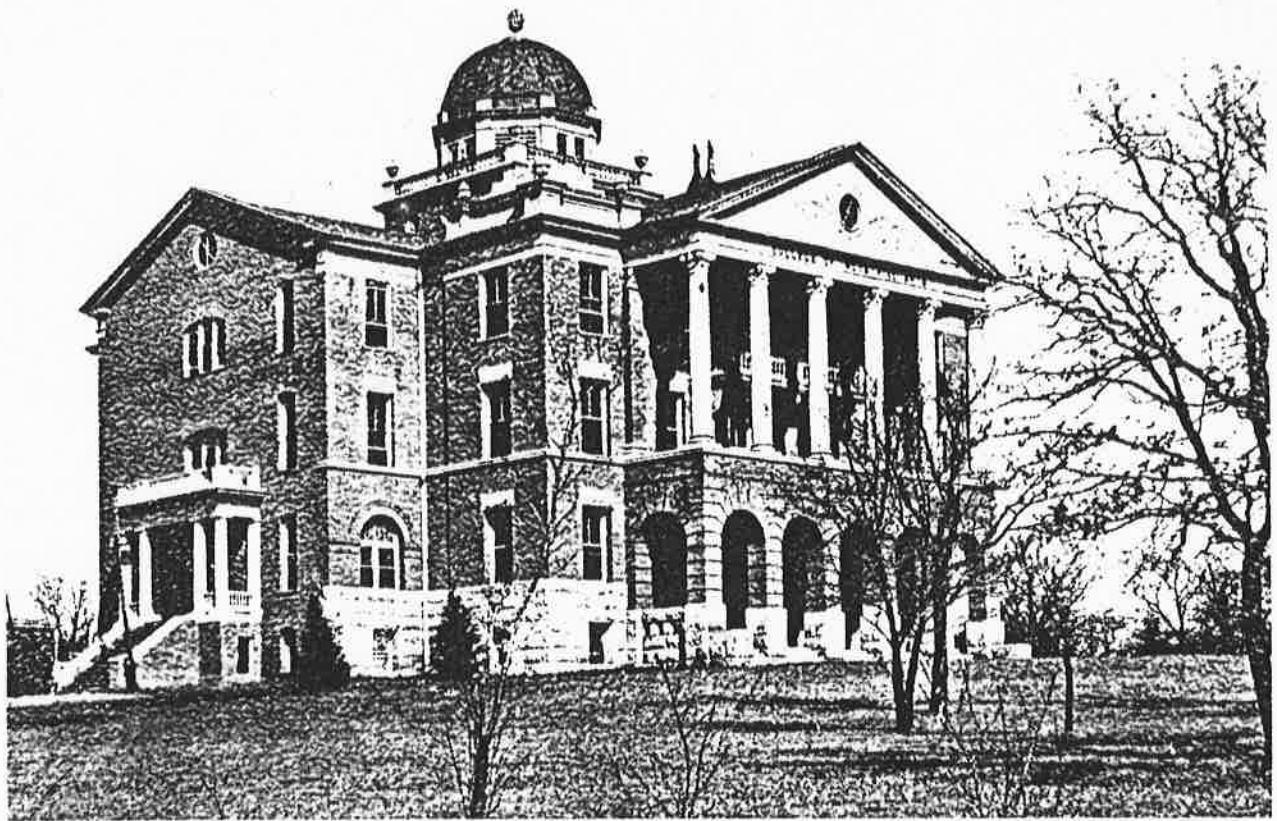
requirements of "healthfulness, moral and social environments and influences, accessibility, and other facts and circumstances affecting the suitability of the site."<sup>2</sup> The first Report of the Board of Regents described the site and the role of Denton citizens in securing the location:

This tract of land is beautifully situated, gently rolling to the south and west, and commanding an exceptionally fine view of the town and surrounding country. Most of the soil is fertile, and the larger portion of the [seventy-acre] tract is in excellent state of cultivation, and there are valuable permanent improvements upon the grounds. In addition to this grant of land, the people of Denton gave \$16,050 as a money bonus, and agreed to dig upon these grounds a six-inch artesian well, guaranteeing therefrom an abundant flow of water. The northeastern portion of the tract is beautifully wooded. The site in the town of Denton is regarded as particularly well adapted to the wants of this institution.<sup>3</sup>

The building was erected in 1902-03. The closing date for the construction contract was August 11, 1902; and the contract required completion within eight months. The cornerstone was laid in elaborate Masonic ceremonies on January 10, 1903. These data are reflected in the First Annual Report of the Board of Regents and in the College Bulletin, Number 2.

The structure was built to house the classrooms, administrative offices, laboratories, library, and auditorium for the Girls Industrial Institute and College. Legislation creating the new college had been passed by the Twenty-seventh Legislature of Texas and signed into law by Governor Joseph D. Sayers in 1901. These actions were the culmination of some ten years of effort, involving principally the work of

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Original Construction, 1902-1903

. . . Mrs. Helen M. Stoddard of Fort Worth, State President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Texas; Hon. A. J. Baker of San Angelo, Judge Sherrill and Judge V. W. Grubbs of Greenville, all members of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Texas; Miss M. Eleanor Brackenridge, a public-spirited woman who was particularly interested in the modern education of young women; and Mrs. Dunklin of Waco, representing the Texas Woman's Press Association.

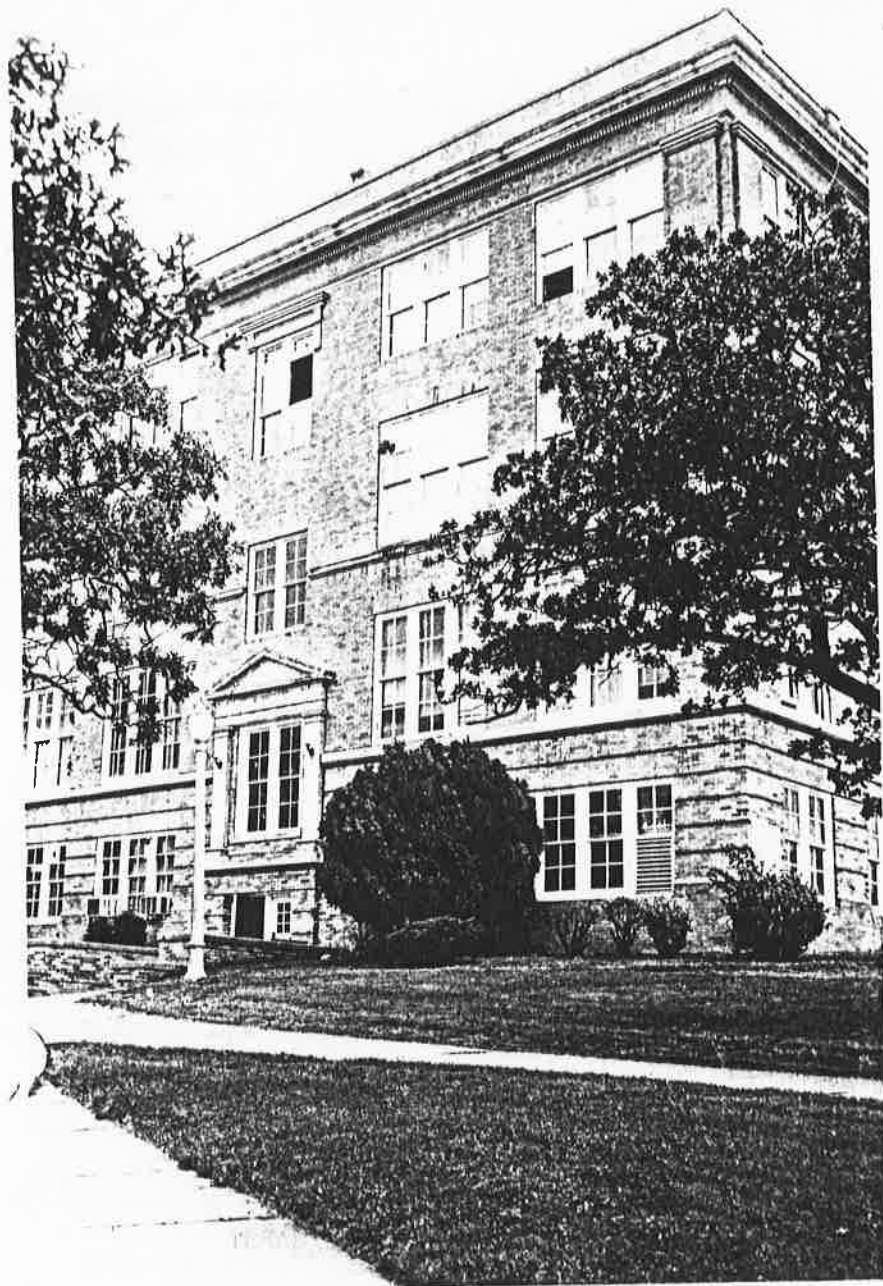
The intensity of Legislative feeling regarding the issue of establishing a school especially for the education of the State's young women is reflected in the fact that a tie vote was cast in each of the houses when the measure came to a vote. It was doubtless because the issue had been made a part of the 1900 platform of the Democratic Party that the casting vote of both presiding officers was affirmative, saving the bill by one vote in each house.<sup>5</sup> Governance of the school was vested by law in a Board of Regents, appointed by the Governor with Senate confirmation. The First Board of the Girls Industrial College and Institute of Texas met, pursuant to call by Governor Sayers, in Denton on April 2, 1902. It was one month later when, after careful analysis of the needs of the college, the Board invited architects to submit plans and specifications for a building. "The idea of the Board was to have in mind a building which, when completed, would be adequate to the wants of the institution, but which could not, for lack of means, be finished in its entirety at the present time."<sup>6</sup>

On July 1 and 2, the Board met again in Denton and selected the plans of the firm of Dodson and Scott of Waco from among the nine proposals submitted. The contract for construction was awarded to Dennis Mahoney of Waxahachie, and construction--to be completed within eight

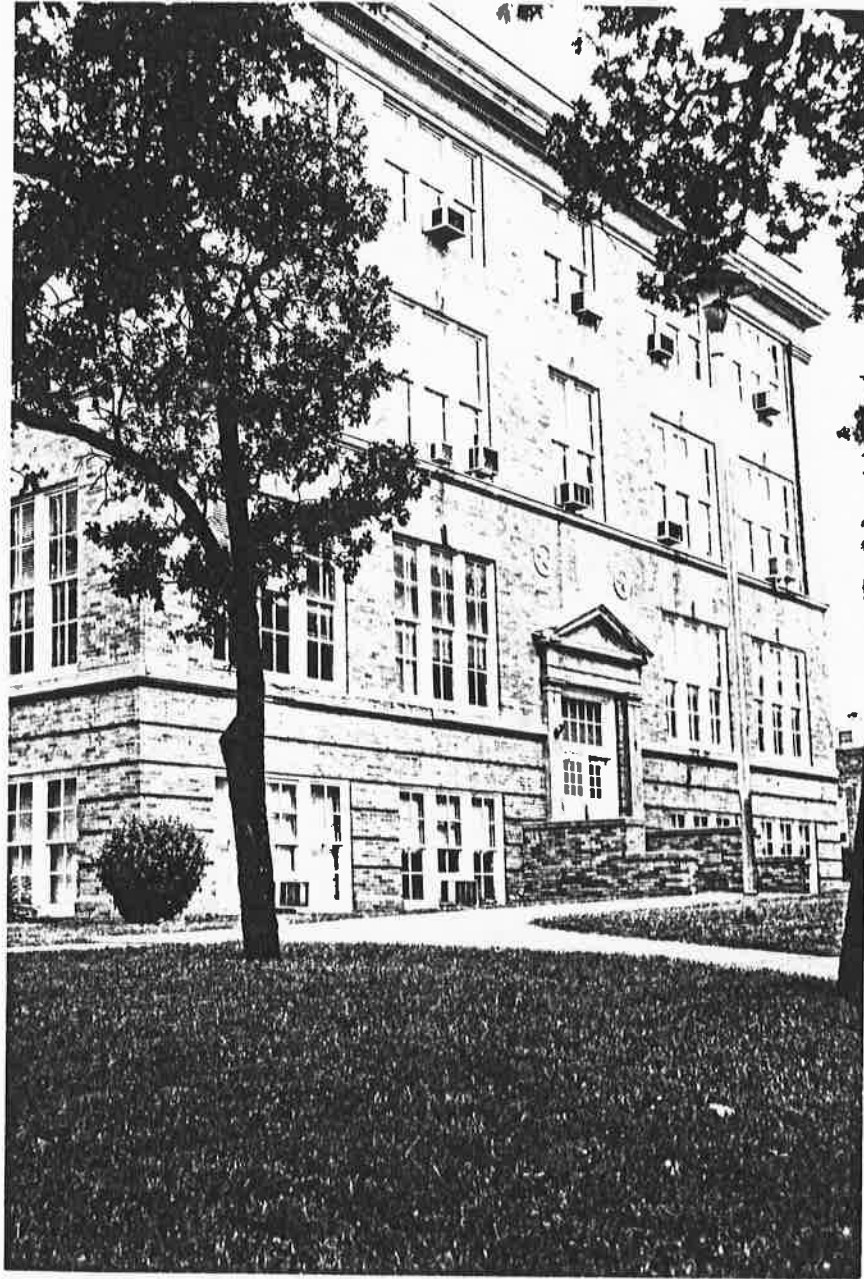
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THE FIRST BUILDING OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
SHOWING ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION  
AND TWO WINGS ADDED IN 1916  
VIEW FROM THE SOUTH (FRONT)  
JUNE, 1973



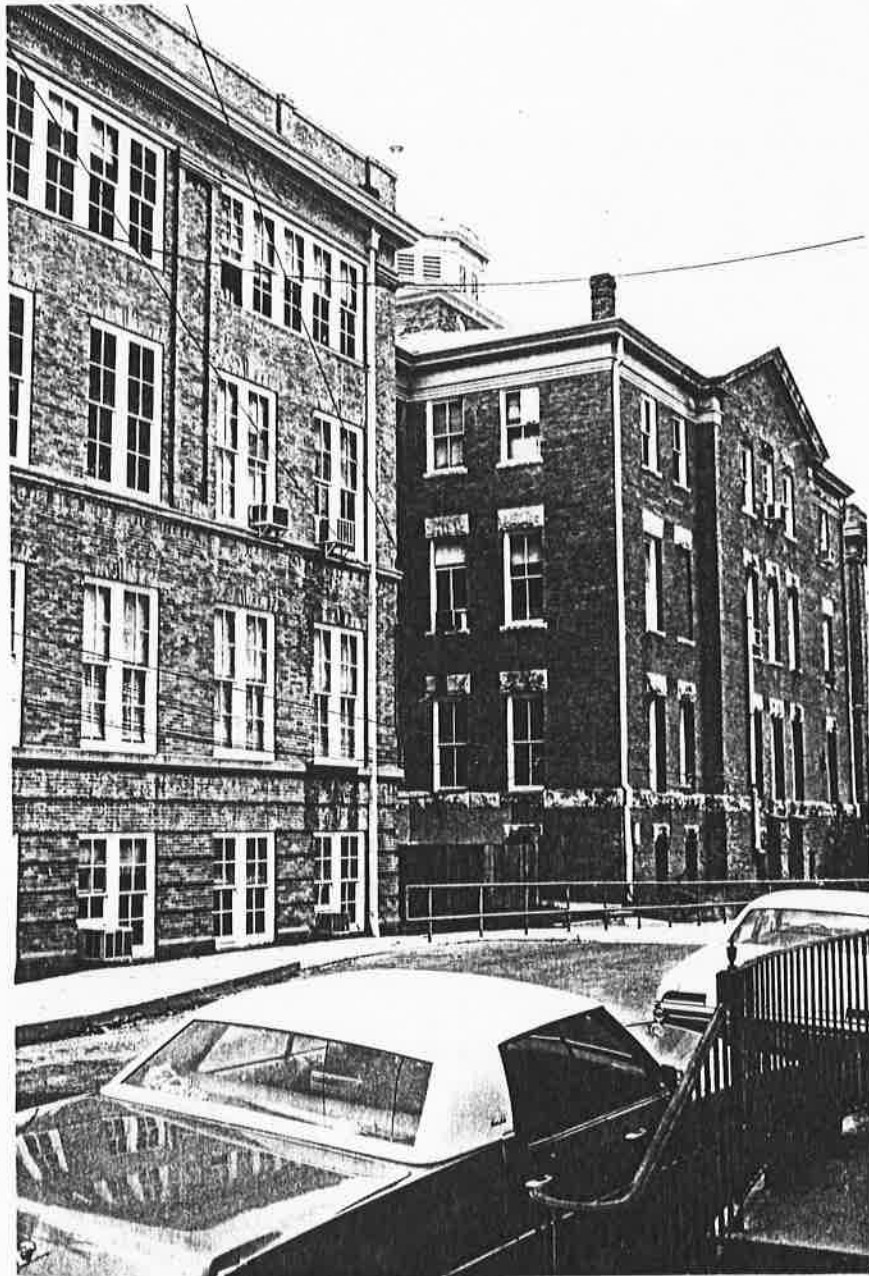
THE FIRST BUILDING OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
VIEW FROM THE WEST  
SEPTEMBER, 1973



THE FIRST BUILDING OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
VIEW FROM THE EAST  
SEPTEMBER, 1973



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THE FIRST BUILDING OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
VIEW FROM THE NORTH  
SEPTEMBER, 1973

months after the closing date of August 11--was to cost the State \$45,462. The Board requested an additional \$15,000 for "necessary and indispensable furniture and apparatus" and \$5,000 "to put the grounds, fences, fields, yards and outbuildings in proper condition."

The College's one building had four floors, including its basement; and its Greek Revival style was characterized by a colonnaded porch and a large silver dome. Its thick walls and high ceilings helped to make it an impressive structure and kept it pleasantly cool during the area's hot weather.

When the cornerstone for the building was laid, the name of the school had been settled as the "Girls Industrial College."\* The Regents selected Mr. Cree T. Work as first President,\*\* and he was among the speakers at the Masonic cornerstone ceremonies on January 10, 1903. The laying of the stone was described in a Dallas News report:

"After the corn, wine, oil, medals and papers, among the latter a copy of the Dallas News' reunion edition, were deposited in the cavity prepared for their reception, the stone was lowered in place, the public grand honors given, the square, level, and plumb applied to the stone, the oil and wine poured in thereupon and implements of masonry turned over to the architect."<sup>8</sup>

Included on one side of the cornerstone was the motto for the school, "We learn to do by doing." In his speech, President Work dedicated the college "to the young womanhood of our great State," and set out the goals he held for it:

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"The names for the institution through its history have been: Girls Industrial College, 1902-05; College of Industrial Arts, 1905-34; Texas State College for Women, 1934-57; and, since 1957, Texas Woman's University.

\*\*The University's six presidents have been: Cree T. Work, 1903-10; William B. Bizzell, 1910-14; Francis Marion Bralley, 1914-24; Lindsey Blayney, 1925-26; Louis H. Hubbard, 1926-50; and, since 1950, John A. Guinn.

In short, we want to meet the need of our times in training women who will be competent, intelligent and refined; well fitted for self-support if this should be necessary; thoroughly prepared for woman's work in the industrial and commercial world if they so choose to labor; well trained for companionship with worthy manhood and for motherhood, when this is desired.<sup>9</sup>

When the Girls Industrial College opened its doors for its first academic year the following September, it had fourteen faculty members and 186 students.

In 1916, wings were added to the Administration Building on the east and west, bringing the full original plans to completion; an elevator was installed; and the original section was fireproofed. A statue of the "Winged Victory" (Nike of Samothrace) was presented by the class of 1929 and stands on the porch, facing to the south.

As other buildings were constructed with the expansion of the University, some departments were moved from the building and others expanded to occupy the vacated space. A small auditorium on the fourth floor was not used as such after the construction of the Household Arts Building in 1913, and the science classrooms and laboratories were moved into the new Science Building in 1936. Also in 1936, the fine arts departments were moved from the first and second floors into their new buildings.<sup>10</sup> For approximately a decade following this removal, the Journalism Department and the College Press occupied the first floor until construction of the new Journalism Building.

When the new Administration Building was built in 1956, the original building--long known to students as the "Ad Building"--became the home

of the College of Education, which remained there until its move in 1973 into the Multipurpose Classroom-Laboratory Building. Presently, the University Research Institute and the Social Work Laboratory are housed in the Building.

The structure is in sound condition; and its interior, following the most recent change in its usage, is in need of the internal refurbishing and restoration now being arranged. Extensive work is contemplated, and planning for a University Archives and Museum has begun so that the first building of the Texas Woman's University may become the repository for records and treasures from its history.

Inevitably the original--and, for many years, the only--building has been central to the life of the University. From its beginning in this one building in 1903, the Texas Woman's University has grown into the nation's only full university for women. It is now a major multi-purpose institution with centers in Dallas and Houston in addition to the Denton campus. The goal of commemorating this structure, initiated and financed by the Past Presidents' Council of the Alumnae Association of TWU, recognizes its importance to the University's history. Finally, the age and character of the building give it historical and architectural value in itself; and it is this as well as its historical value which prompted the decision to seek commemoration through an Official Texas Historical Marker.

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## FOOTNOTES

1. A. Elizabeth Taylor, "A Summary History of Texas Woman's University" (Unpublished, 1971), p. 2.
2. Session Laws, Twenty-Seventh Legislature of Texas, Chapter XXXII, Section 5.
3. First Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Girls Industrial College of Texas for the Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1902, p. 4.
4. E. V. White, Historical Record of the Texas State College for Women: The First Forty-five Years, 1903-1948 (Denton: The College Press, T. S. C. W., 1948), p. 5.
5. Ed. F. Bates, History and Reminiscences of Denton County (Denton: McNitzky Printing Co., 1918), p. 229.
6. First Annual Report, p. 4.
7. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
8. Quoted in Bates, op. cit., p. 237.
9. Cree T. Work, "Purpose and Scope of the Girls Industrial College," in Plan and Scope of the Girls Industrial College of Texas, College Bulletin No. 2 (June, 1903), p. 23.
10. The Daily Lass-o, October 18, 1972, p. 3.