

"Mound" includes 3000 acres

Damon settled in 1829 by Abraham Darst family

(To mark the observance of our nation's 200th birthday, Gulf States Tube Corp., is presenting the history of each of the cities and communities where employees presently reside. A list of the employees is given below)



Damon (Damon's Mound) is a small community off Highway 36 between Needville and West Columbia, two miles from the San Bernard River and eight miles from the Brazos River. The mound the town is built on consists of about 3000 acres. It rises to a height of about 97 feet above the level land surrounding it and gradually slopes to level on all sides. West of the mound, beginning almost at the base, lies a great forest of live oak, pecan, ash, cedar, cypress and many other varieties of trees.

The mound is considered a freak of nature to many, but one author calls it the beauty spot of South Texas. It is rich in history and natural resources.

Damon's Mound was settled in 1829 by Abraham Darst and his family on the original grant the Mexican

Mound. He and Lorena and their family lived there for about 50 years.

Samuel Damon made his living working as a carpenter, mason, blacksmith and wheelwright. He made brick and had a sawmill. He furnished brick for most of the plantations and sugar mills in the county as well as mined most of the limestone used in South Texas in the early days. It is said that the limestone for the first Capitol in 1880 came from Damon's Mound.

The Damon house was known for its week-long Christmas parties and dances. People were invited from Richmond, East Bernard, Wharton, Columbia, Brazoria and Matagorda for this gala occasion and they all stayed at the Damon house for the full week.

Samuel Damon obtained a license from the Mexican

government conceded to him as a colonist. The grant consisted of a league (4420 acres) and a labor (117 acres) of land. The Darsts were a part of Stephen F. Austin's second colony.

Abraham Darst had five children by his first wife, Tabattha, one of them being Lorena. She was born in 1811, the oldest member of the family and great-granddaughter of Daniel Boone.

In 1831 Samuel Damon (born in Reading, Mass. and moved to Stetson, Maine in 1828) arrived by boat at Velasco just as the Mexican government had stopped immigration. No one was permitted to land, so Damon jumped ship and swam ashore. To avoid capture, he hurried about 30 miles inland and came to the camp of Abraham Darst, on the mound. Damon was an able carpenter and brick maker so he helped to build the Darst

government to operate a freight line between Comumbia and San Antonio. At first he only had one Mexican helper. Each drove an ox wagon and traveled from 15 to 20 miles a day under many dangerous conditions.

In 1850 Damon had the contract to cut cedar ties for the first railroad in Texas (from Houston to Wharton). He went to New York for the necessary machinery and had to mortgage 5000 acres of land. He also bought \$3000 in railroad stock.

When the rails reached Columbia, the Civil War had broken out, so the railroad was never finished. Samuel Damon lost all the land he had mortgaged, and the railroad bonds were never redeemed.

Because of this, ownership of the mound virtually changed hands. It was now owned by many people, but mostly by R. T.

that the water seeping from a crevice at the base of the mound was sour. They thought it would make good lemonade, so they ran to the house for sugar and cups. When the grownups learned of this they investigated and found the water to have medicinal use.

At first only the people in the area used it. They made a slave from the soil and used it in healing wounds and abrasions.

Word spread, and later the Desdemona Magnetic Mineral Corporation bought land around the ravine. They called their product Vidor Ore.

In 1901, Anthony Lucas discovered sulphur deposits said to have a total thickness of 164 ft. It was not until 1951 that Standard Sulphur Co. began mining and operated until 1956.

The first oil well was drilled in Damon in 1901,

making it one of the first oil fields in Texas. However, not until 1917 did it produce in paying quantities.

In 1903 three wells were drilled on the R. T. Mulcahy land. In 1914 the first real oil was discovered on Henry Widsom's land. Wisdom was employed on the rig which made the discovery.

The Texas Exploration Co., which made the discovery, obtained a lease on most of the land around Damon. The great cost of leases kept the company from developing the field. To prevent a land grab and rush by other companies, Texas Exploration built a fence around the well and managed to keep it secret.

In 1917 Texas Exploration sold to Sinclair, who had the money and resources to develop the field.

On April 9, 1917 Bryan No. 3 on the H. L. & T. H. Bryan lease blew in, gushing 1500 feet and

tents were thrown up everywhere.

Almost overnight a town sprang up in the middle of the oil field. There was no time for planning, and streets were almost nonexistent. Stores, hotels, boarding houses, a movie theater, bank and drug store were soon built.

Some of the men who served for Sinclair as field foremen were Dale Meyer, Jeff Hooper, and Claude Ellis.

The first general store was established about 1866 by Hampton Bryan, and the first post office was in his store.

After the Texas and New Orleans Railroad connected the mound with Rosenberg in 1918, businessmen moved their buildings one by one and located on the east side near the railroad.

Some of the businesses moved were Mrs. H. H.

G. Wruck's grocery store, A. O. Smith's barber shop, Robinson's meat market, the Fort Bend Telephone office operated by Mrs. Ada Perdue -- Ft. Bend Telephone still serves Damon), Hieny's drug store, Charlie Pavlas' grocery store, and Fraley's Hotel.

Other businesses were Hart's drug store, Damon State Bank, Robinowitz & Bul's general mercantile, Sinclair Garage (owned by Mrs. H. H. Comley), Gulf service station (operated by Guy & Ruby Middleton), Barta's cafe (later bought and operated as a hotel and cafe by Mrs. Lilly Phillips), and Upham Lumber Co.

The arrival of the railroad was a great help to the businessmen as well as the cattlemen and farmers. The cattlemen could now ship their cattle to Fort Worth by carload lots (this being the closest stockyard

by one and the east side railroad.

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the stock law was passed, the mound was open range to cattlemen. Among those grazing cattle there were W. O. Mock, Mr. Hopkins, Sid and Sherley Beard, the Camphills, Mr. Dick Parrot (who came to Damon to work in the lime quarry), Mr. Smith, Mr. W. H. Cates, Mr. Will Nash and Vic Holewyn.

In the spring of 1932, Highway 36 was completed past Damon. Before that time there were only dirt roads leading from the mound.

Sometimes after a hard rain, it was almost impossible to get out without the aid of the farmers along the way and their mules to pull travelers through the mud holes. The completion of Highway 36 ran from Rosenberg to Freeport and made travel much easier and more pleasant.

Religion, like business, also prospered during the oil boom. The first church, constructed from contributions by the residents, was a Union Church to be used by all demoninations. When the town moved, another Union Church was built near the school and was used by Methodist, Baptist and Church of

Christ members.

In 1925, under the direction of Father Keveton, the Czech families in the area built the first Catholic church. In 1970 a new and modern Catholic church was built-

Mrs. Darst's statement claims Boone kinship

A statement of Mrs. Lorena Damon-relative to the Great Daniel Boone of Kentucky, who afterwards emigrated to St. Charles County, Missouri, where he died in the year of 1820 A.D. To the best of my recollection he was an Englishman by birth, so my father said. He left three sons, that I remember, Jessy Boone, who was elected to the Legislature and died; Daniel Boone went to Arkansas, Nathan also went to Arkansas-he was a surveyor by profession.

Daniel Boone's daughter, Gemina Callaway, was my grandmother. She was captured by the Indians and recaptured by General Boone after a bloody conflict. My mother's maiden name was Tabithy Callaway, afterwards married Abraham Darst. He was a German from Pennsylvania.

My father, Abraham Darst, had five children by his first wife-Tabithy Callaway. Their names to wit: Lorena Darst, (afterwards Lorena Damon) Emory Darst, Edmond Callaway Darst, Patric Ewin Darst and John Grubs Darst. This was my Mother's family.

My Father after married Gemina Brownfield in Feyeth County, Illinois. My Father left his children in Missouri until his return with his wife, where he then lived about nine or ten years, then emigrated to Texas, to what is known as Damons Mound in Fort Bend County, in September 22, 1829. He had in the meantime raised a family by his second marriage, the names of which I give; Richard Brownfield Darst, Jessy Holman Darst, Abraham Darst, Jr. and Iramenta Darst, all of which lived to be grown and then died.

My Mother's family are all dead, except myself, and all leaving large families. My Father, Abraham Darst, died during Christmas, 1833, on the Mound in Fort Bend County, afterwards changed to Brazoria County.

I was married to Samuel Damon at the Mound in the year 1834, September 18th. I have a family of four boys and two girls Daniel Boone Damon, Sylvester W. Damon, Warren Damon, Samuel Damon, Jr., Annie Ellija Gallaher, Lorena Perkins. My husband is also dead, after having been happily married forty-nine years.

I was born in St. Charles County, Missouri, May 1st, 1811, and am now seventy-two years of age. My husband was born in Maine, Jan. 22, 1808.

(Signed) L. Damon
I will further say--I was with Grand-dady Boone up to his death, though I was quite small. I remember him well as he often took us children out, and he would take his seat in the woods while we played around him and enjoyed ourselves. I remember when he was buried, and the same wagon that carried him to the grave hauled us to Texas.

Lorena Damon
(Died January 29th, 1890)

The First English Lutheran Church was built in 1926. The Church of Christ moved out of the Union Church and built their own in 1932. The Methodists also discontinued services at the Union Church and gave it to the Baptists.

The Damon Cemetery is one of the oldest in Texas. Both Abraham Darst and Sam Damon are buried there, as well as other members of both families. The Damon family gave it to the town as a community cemetery. Mrs. Ricks and Mrs. C. H. Gittipie were the first directors.

The first school in the area was built near the oil field but the exact date is not certain. This building was destroyed in the 1900 storm. Another was built in its place and served until 1921, when a new two story building was constructed near the peak of the mound between the old and new town.

In 1949 a new building was added and connected by a walkway to the old building. In 1955 a large gymnasium, cafeteria, and more classrooms were added. In 1975 a science building was built.

From 1924 to 1947, the town was large enough to support a high school, but after that only eight grades were taught. The high school students either went to West Columbia or Needville

The first gin in Damon was owned by Will Schendel and W. O. Mock. Later Mr. Horac bought Mock's share. When the gin was moved across the road into a new building, Emil Barta bought Mr. Schendel's share. At the present time it is owned by Emil and Joe Barta.

A co-op gin was built about two miles out of town in 1956 and ginned its first crop the same year.

Dr. R. A. Farmer was the first resident doctor, and served the mound during the boom days. Dr. J. M. Doss came to Damon in 1928 and practiced medicine until his death in 1931.

Mr. Hiney, who owned a drug store, treated injuries and minor illnesses when the town had no doctor. He also was said to have made the best ice cream in the

Cream. People supposedly made special trips through Damon to buy some.

During the early 1930's Mrs. Lilly Phillips furnished the town with milk, supplying the stores and delivering to those who asked for it. In later years, Mrs. George Hooten and her son Jack supplied and delivered milk to many of the townspeople.

Kyle Hall and Arthur Eversole operated the first water system to be piped to homes. Before they went into operation, water was hauled by mule wagon from an artesian well on the North side of the hill, and people bought it by the barrel. This was quite expensive and not very sanitary, but it was believed that good water could not be found on the mound.

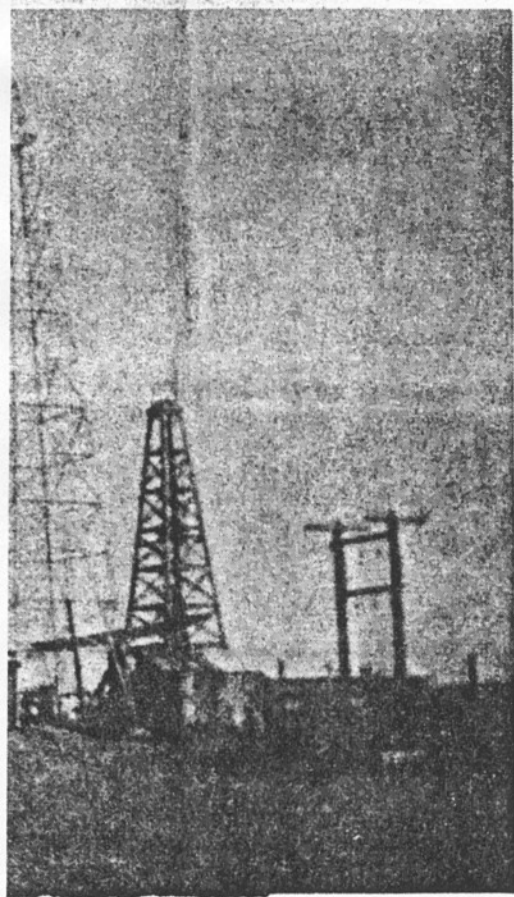
John McLarty played a great part in the development of the water and sewer systems and served as manager until his death. The water system went into operation in 1956 and the sewer system was installed in 1973.

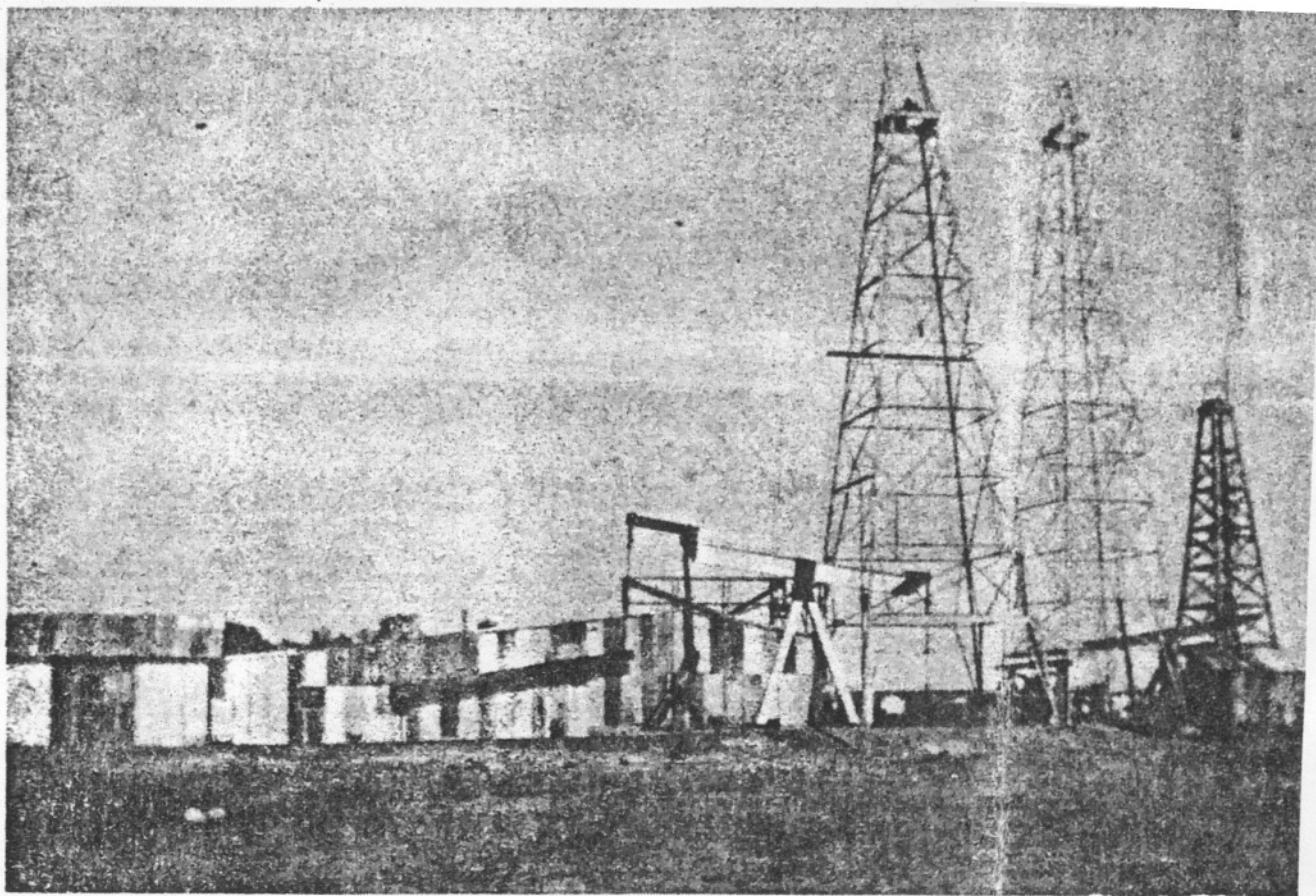
The Damon Lions Club began operation in 1948 with L. C. Nordt as its first president.

The Damon Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1949 and elected Herbert Fleming as fire chief, Joe Barta as first assistant, G. M. Dement as second assistant, and Harold Gueldner as secretary - treasurer.

Damon was part of Fort Bend County in 1836 when Texas was divided into 23 counties. Later, the county line was straightened, and Damon was included in Brazoria County.

(Information for this history was provided by Mrs. A. G. Gordon. G. M. Dement supplied the photographs.)





Early oil field in Damon

Gulf States Tube employs 3 from Damon:

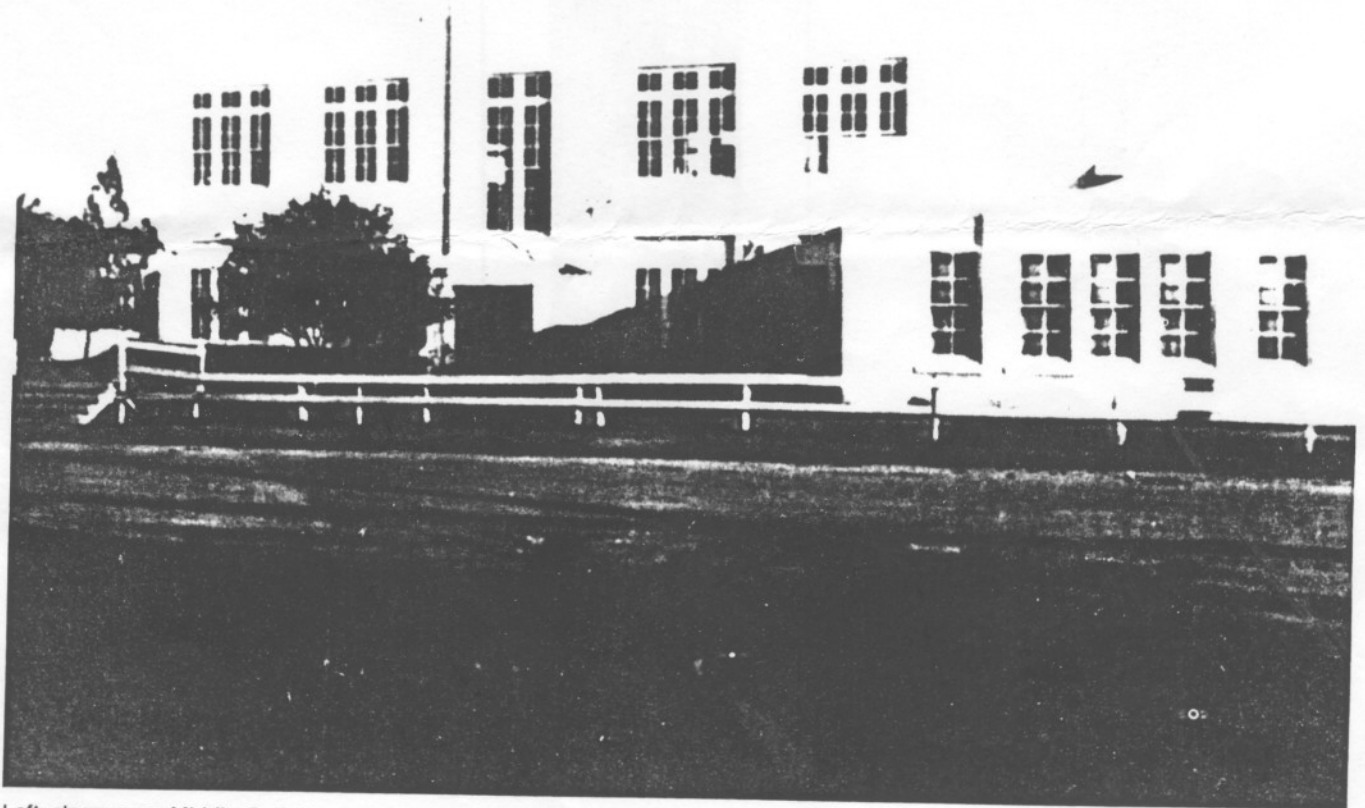
O.F. Johnson, R. Nawara and K. Nawara



Damon High School's graduating class of 1922

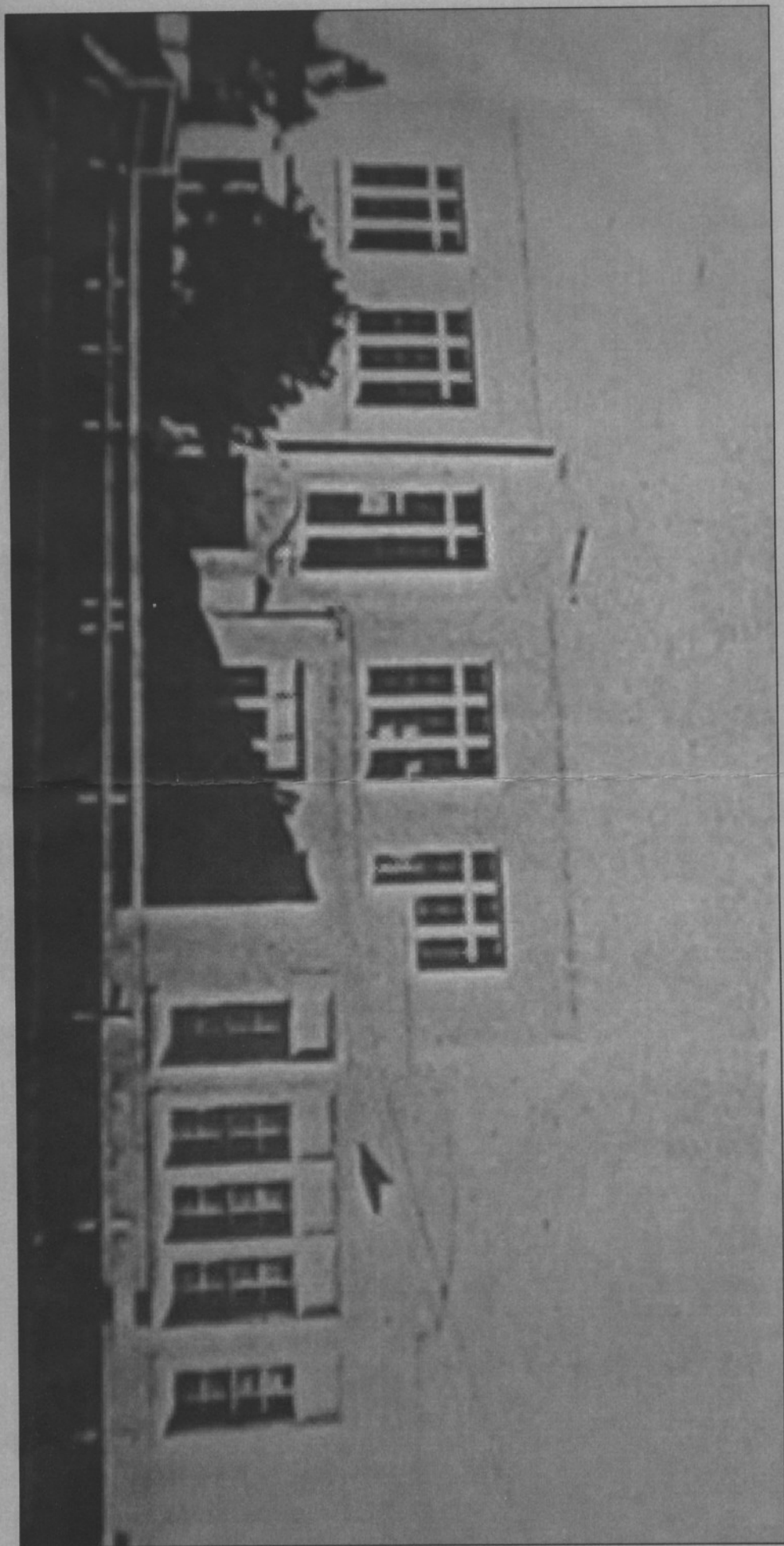
The Way We Were

During the early 1920's, the community erected a new school changing locations from behind the hill to the present site. The curriculum at that time included first grade through high school. That building which was constructed is what is now known as "Old Damon School." The old school stood until it was replaced in 1950, being periodically enlarged until 1975 when the Jr. High annex was built.



Left: classrooms Middle: 2nd story school building Right: classrooms Top: auditorium, Bottom: classrooms

Damon School



1924