Notes on Art objects in Harlingen

1928  This same year the South Ward School at 306 W. Lincoln is erected. It is later renamed the James C. Bowie Elementary School. Its unique colorful cast-concrete frieze by Luiz Lopez Sanchez provides it the nickname, La Escuela de la Vibores (the school of snakes.) The façade blends Mexican and native-American motifs. At this time at 700 E. Austin the North Ward School, later to be called Austin Elementary, is built with designs by the Meriwether and Sauers Company. The combined cost for both is $93, 258.50.

9/4/30  Called "the showplace of the Valley", the new $350,000 senior high school at 125 S. 13th Street at Harrison is dedicated. It is designed by architects Dewitt and Washburn of Dallas. The former designed the east wing of the White House. At this time the superintendent of schools is Paul E. Phipps. On the board of Trustees are Mrs. J.I. Coursey, O.N. Joyner, Ira E. Eells, S.D. Grant, A.E. McClendon, and Dr. John Crockett. The last senior class to use the facility is that of 1959 which started there but finished in the new high school on Marshall Street. The Spanish Revival style facility in 1958 becomes Vernon Junior High School named in honor of Julia Vernon, a popular English teacher and librarian for years at the high school.

A Harlingen Cemetery Chronology

12/10/09 Seventeen year old Robert Keen Weems is to die in an industrial accident. Town founder, Lon C. Hill, in a telegram from St. Louis designates a site along the San Benito Highway, now South F Street, for the burial.

2/1/12 Initially the Harlingen Cemetery Association, an offshoot of the Harlingen Civic Club (a women's organization), handles burial arrangements, but upon the club's recommendation the Harlingen Land and Water Company sells 7.6 acres for one dollar to the Trustees for the Harlingen Cemetery. These were B.F. Surface, C.W. Clift, and E.W. Anglin.


5/9/47 The Trustees deed the cemetery property to the City of Harlingen. Prior to this date the cemetery includes two major sections. F Street to E Street is the "American Section, and E Street to D Street is the "Mexican Section". Other areas were designated for blacks and for babies. After this month, grave sites may be selected regardless of ethnic or racial origin.

1962 The Tip-O-Texas Genealogical Society surveys and records graves in the cemetery.

1974 The City Commission authorizes a hurricane fence topped with barbed wire to surround the cemetery and two lockable gates. These are erected around the site to stop vandalism. Although the cemetery had a sexton or caretaker, it became neglected in appearance over time.
1981 The Harlingen Cemetery is included in the Harlingen Register of Historic Places.

1982 The Tip-O-Texas Genealogical Society updates, corrects, and alphabetizes the Harlingen Cemetery grave list.

1984 Thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Menton (Betty) Murray, who compiles a history of the cemetery among other lobbying work, a Texas Historical Commission Marker is obtained for the Harlingen Cemetery.

2000s Harlingen Proud, the city, and other organizations take a renewed interest in the cemetery, its heritage, and its maintenance.

11/1/04 The Harlingen Cemetery sees its first annual Día de los Muertos or Day of the Dead Celebration.

3/05 The Harlingen Public Library computerizes all available names and additional information on individuals buried in the Harlingen Cemetery. Mary Lou Rumbo of the Harlingen Historical Preservation Society spearheads efforts to organize documents and people to systematically plot the graves and accompanying names of those buried in the Harlingen Cemetery. Considerable material is gathered and archived in the Archive Room at the Harlingen Public Library.

10/16/10 The Very Rev. Henry Constantinau blesses the new 50'x25' frame chapel, as a Catholic mission named the Sacred Heart of Mary Immaculate.

1929 mid-year Jose Vallejo, his sons, and brother-in-law, Augustin Martinez, help to rebuild the white frame structure for the parish of the Sacred Heart of Mary Church which changes its name in 1955 to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church.

1932 Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church sanctuary doubles its physical capacity with the addition of a transept.

5/11/48 New $92,000 brick sanctuary of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church is dedicated at the southwest corner of Tyler and C Streets.

1954 Marble statue "Ave Maria" by Houston crafters, the Galea Brothers, is placed beside the bell tower on Tyler Avenue & C Street corner.

First United Methodist Church Stain Glass Windows were dedicated 9/25/49. East side center window is "The Good Shepherd". The center west side window is "Christ and Children". North window on west side is Christ rising from the Crypt while south side is the Risen Christ.

Harlingen Public Library Courtyard Life Size Bronze Sculptures:
By the Gary Lee Price Studio, Mark Twain on Bench; Learning Curve, Book Worm (boy); Book Worm (girl).
By Paul Moore, Fireflies (boy and girl with bottle of fireflies).
Under construction for R.L. and Ola Hill as the Hurricane of 1933 strikes is a Spanish Colonial Revival home at 1102 Taylor. It has notable architectural elements including arched doorways, and windows and a hand-carved front door. The panels of the mesquite door show brush as the explorers found it here, ranch scenes, brush clearing and the introduction of water, and citrus and palm trees.

The White Cleaners Building began its life as an automobile showroom for Harlingen's first Ford dealer, L. R. Hollingsworth, who had constructed the two-story store and family quarters across the street for his Hollingsworth Motor Company. Built in the year 1930, the structure is an excellent example of art deco architecture. Knapp Chevrolet bought the premise before the Hurricane of 1933.

There is no Statue of Liberty in Liberty Park. Possibly it was removed because of vandalism.