

Oswald Below Average in Junior High

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Lee H. Oswald made below-average grades when he was a junior high school student here in 1955, but his instructors saw no evidence of maladjustment.

This was shown today in an examination of the slim manila folder on the 24-year-old man who was accused of assassinating President Kennedy. Oswald himself was slain Nov. 24, two days after the President's death.

The record on file at Warren Easton High School, showed that Oswald, as a teen-ager, was a poor speller, had an immature handwriting and commanded little attention from his teachers.

Neither Oswald nor his teachers thought of his going to college.

When a letter came from Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, his mother, advising the school that the family was moving from New Orleans, the memory of Lee Oswald faded from his teachers' minds.

Around December, 1953, Oswald entered Beauregard Junior High School, at 4621 Canal Street, as an eighth-grade transfer student from Public School 44 in New York City. The officials at Beauregard were unaware that school authorities in New York had decided that Oswald needed psychiatric help for his chronic truancy.

He was not a truant in New Orleans. In the ninth grade at Beauregard, Oswald was absent nine days. John Martin, who is now principal at Beauregard, said such an attendance record was considered good.

A mimeographed form, placed into Oswald's file when he was in the eighth grade, gave school authorities an opportunity to comment on his adjustment to life around him.

They could have made entries under the categories of special interests and aptitudes, and special problems, such as marked truancy, extreme withdrawal, need for financial help and maladjustment, both socially and emotionally. All these spaces were left blank.

When Oswald finished the year, his over-all grade average was 73, or comparable to a 'D', school officials said.

In English his final grade was 73. In mathematics it was 70, in social studies 70, in science 74, in industrial arts 78, and in physical education 73.

A grade of 70 is considered passing. The average grade at Beauregard at that time was 79 or 80.

In October, 1954, when Oswald entered the ninth grade at Beauregard, he took an aptitude and achievement test on reading, vocabulary and mathematics.

His scores were 49 on reading, 48 on vocabulary and 43 on mathematics. The averages in New Orleans on these tests were 62, 63 and 63; the national averages were 60, 60 and 68.

When Oswald finished the ninth grade at Beauregard, his over-all classroom average had risen to 77. His final mark in English was 70. In mathematics he was graded 75, in civics 83, in science 76, in fine arts 81, and in physical education 78.

As Oswald finished his year and a half at Beauregard and prepared to enter senior high school at Warren Easton, he was asked to fill out a personal history form.

The form, dated June 2, 1955, gave Oswald's address as 126 Exchange Place in New Orleans. Previously the address given on school forms had been 809 French Street.

The French Street address is in a well-kept, middle-class neighborhood in the city's Lakeview area. Exchange Place, which runs for three blocks off Canal Street into the gaudy heart of the French Quarter, is fronted by saloons.

Some observers have speculated that Oswald's mother may have suffered financial troubles that made the move necessary. Mrs. Oswald has not commented on this.

A Personal History Form

Oswald wrote on the personal history form that he had no home telephone. He gave his height as 5 feet 5 inches and his weight as 135 pounds. He said he had attended "Riglin Elementary School," an apparent reference to Ridglea School in Fort Worth, Tex., where the family had earlier lived.

For his father's name, Oswald wrote "Robert Ewduard Oswald." He noted that his father was dead. He gave his mother's maiden name as "Margret Clovier." Her occupation, he wrote, was store manager, but he left the name of the store blank.

(Oswald's birth certificate, which records his birth date as Oct. 18, 1939, lists his mother's maiden name as Marguerite Claverie and his father's name as Robert Oswald.)

Beside the classification for religion, Oswald wrote "Luthan." When asked the name of the church he attended, he drew a pencil line through the blank.

Oswald also wrote that he had held a job, for 10 weeks, as a "retail shoe salesmen" under a "M. Goodman."

He said he liked civics, science and mathematics best among his subjects, and that he liked English and art least. His vocational choices were biology and mechanical drawing, in that order.

Under a question asking what he intended to do after high school, Oswald avoided boxes marked "college" and "vocational," but checked both "military service" and "undecided."

He described his general health as good, and recalled only one health condition that would be likely to remain: "abnormal eardrum in left ear."

He checked no special skills and no foreign languages. For recreation he listed reading and outdoor sports. He listed football as his favorite sport.

Asked if he had any close friends in the school, he wrote in "No." The next question was "If so, name two." Oswald wrote in two names. The names, however, were erased, presumably by him.

Oswald left Beauregard that summer. On Sept. 8, 1955, he entered Warren Easton High School at 3019 Canal Street. While the junior high school would have taken students only from the Lakeview area, Warren Easton took students from both Lakeview and from the downtown section, which included Exchange Place.

James E. Dean Jr., first assistant superintendent of Orleans Parish [County] schools, was assistant principal at Warren Easton at the time.

"I handled 90 per cent of the routine disciplinary cases," he recalled this week. "We called the kids who were troublemakers 'characters.' If he had been a 'character,' I would have remembered him. As it was, I didn't remember him. His name never came up."

Oswald stayed only 23 days at Warren Easton. His record was marked "incomplete," and it contained this pencil-written note from Oswald's mother, dated Oct. 7, 1955:

"To whom it may concern:
"Because we are moving to San Diego in the middle of this month Lee must quit school now. Also, please send by him any papers such as his birth certificate that you may have. Thank you.

"Sincerely,

"Mrs. M. Oswald."

On the bottom of Oswald's school record the following notation, the final entry in his record, appears:

"Transcript sent to Arlington Heights Senior Hi, Fort Worth, Tex., 9-18-56."

Mr. Dean said that the New Orleans school system had the part-time services of a psychiatrist in 1954 and 1955. If Oswald had shown any need for psychiatric aid, it would have been given him, he said.

"But there was no report that would indicate that this boy was in any way unusual," Mr. Dean declared. "Rather, I'd say, he was inconspicuous."