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Head: super:S-T Reporter Recalls
reg: Oswald as Child: Soft-Spoken Yet Leader for Schoolmates

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In 1947, the year I met Lee Oswald, I'm sure neither of us had heard of John Kennedy nor Karl Marx.

But to this tousle-haired boy, who was my classmate in the second grade at Lily B. Clayton Elementary School in Fort Worth, these two men were to probably be the most important in Lee's life---and death.

Of all the boys in our class at the South Side school, I think probably Lee Oswald stands out most vividly in my mind.

Perhaps it's because of the mystery that seemed to surround this quiet, soft-spoken and popular boy.

No one in our class was a close friend of Lee's. Yet, all of the boys seemed to look up to him.

During recess periods, the boys would form into what we called "gangs" and engage in friendly wrestling matches or games of touch football.

According to the code of us 7 or 8-year-olds, being in Lee's gang was a high honor.

Lee was a leader and he chose those to serve with him on the grade school playground.

In class, he remained quiet. I can recall no disciplinary action being taken against him.

He usually answered questions when called upon, or told our teacher, Mrs. Florence Murphy, he didn't know the answer.

He appeared to be honest.

When we were called upon to read aloud, I remember that Lee read well, but also recall that when report card time came around, he didn't post very good grades.

I never saw Lee outside of school.

To my knowledge, he didn't associate with any of his classmates except during school hours.

***When my friends talked about Lee, they always tagged him as "a good old guy." But nobody knew much about him, except that he lived with his mother and apparently had no father.

As the years passed, I would look at our second grade class photograph from time to time. Most of the kids' names I had forgotten. But I could always look at the smiling kid on the front row and think: "That's Lee Oswald."

I moved from the South Side the year after the second grade and never saw Lee again until Friday.

That was in the Dallas City Hall where reporters, like myself, craned necks to get a look through a crack in a door leading to a room where he was being questioned.

The last time I saw him was on television Sunday.

He was being led in the city hall, when a man fired a bullet into his stomach. He was dead in less than an hour.

Then, I looked again at the picture made 16 years ago of the smiling boy on the school steps.

The disbelief was almost as great as when I heard the first word of Kennedy's assassination.