

***The Historic Schools Within the Boundaries of the  
Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District***

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## Land Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

The reader will note that throughout the information in this document, the tribal ancestral land upon which a school was built is often mentioned, as well as the Native name(s) for the area if known. This author feels it's important for students to know on whose ancestral territory they live and attend school. Such a "Land Acknowledgment" respects Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the land and recognizes their enduring relationship with their traditional territories. In addition, it's important to note that the information on these pages is based on available historical documents and people's recollections. Not all may be accurate, and documented corrections to the information are welcome.

## Historical Schools in the Southern Trinity Area

### Betts School

A man by the name of Charles E. Betts owned two tracts of land just to the south of the Long Ridge Divide in the Lousy Creek area of Southern Trinity County. Nine Betts children are listed on the 1940 census as being of school age so it's likely that a school was functioning there during this time.<sup>1</sup>

So far, nothing in the Trinity County Office of Education records has been found to confirm that a school by the name of Betts was established at the Betts place or anywhere in the county. It was likely a private school and not one funded or formally recognized by the County Office of Education. However, Jim French (former Trinity County Superintendent of Schools) had personal knowledge of the school's existence and pointed out the location on a county map.<sup>2</sup>

Jim Burgess, in 2005, indicated that Betts, "...put up a building and they [the county] hired a school teacher to come in because he had eleven children I think. There was [sic] other kids who went there too."<sup>3</sup> Given the information that the County Office of Education was involved, there may be another explanation. A second informant by the name of Wm. Travis McCulloch mentioned that in 1948 he attended Lake Mountain School). He indicated that the teacher was Faye Banks Smith and the *only other students were from the Betts family*.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, it's possible that this was actually the official Lake Mountain School, but was colloquially referred

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<sup>1</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed November 4, 2022. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Supahan, Sarah, personal communication with French, Jim, November 4, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School" 2008.

to as Betts School as it was primarily the Betts children who attended. Unfortunately, we may never know for sure.

See also **Lake Mountain School** and **Long Ridge School**.



school “adjacent to the Hiram Willburn place” or, more specifically, “south and east of the Willburn cabin”. The schoolhouse and surrounds may have actually been located in whole or in part on National Forest lands. Whether or not that was known at the time is unclear.<sup>9</sup>

In April of 1906, Caution School was noted to have opened for the Spring Term on April 16<sup>th</sup> and a humorous note in the local paper said, “...so the switch of the birch is heard in the land.”<sup>10</sup>

Documentation indicates that a fire burned the town of Caution in “about 1915”. After the fire, the town, along with its post office, was relocated across the North Fork of the Eel River to Long Ridge, “where there was a school, a post office, and a blacksmith shop”.<sup>11</sup> Because the Long Ridge School itself was closed during the 1914-15 school year and remained closed until the 1917-18 school year, it could mean that during that time, the Caution School relocated into the Long Ridge Schoolhouse, at least temporarily.<sup>12</sup>

In notes from the 1919-20 school year, it was, “impossible to secure [a] teacher” for the Caution School. The handwritten notation continues, “This district is very remote and this fact, coupled with the shortage of teachers makes it almost impossible to have school.”<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, the attendance at Caution during the 1919-20 school year could not be counted because the school did not run for the required 120 days as indicated in another notation.<sup>14</sup> It must be assumed that this was due to the lack of a teacher. Consequently, Caution School was suspended that year, but was back in session during the 1921-22 school year, was suspended again for the 1922-23 school year, and then lapsed (closed or merged with another district) on July 2, 1923, along with several other schools.<sup>15</sup> Further evidence suggests that, given the number and ages of the children in the different Willburn families as well as the nearby Russ and Meyers families, it was only during the period of about 1905 to about 1920 that there would have been enough children in the area to provide for the required number of enrolled students to fund a public school (usually six or more), although it’s clear that some exceptions were made in early Trinity County School history.<sup>16</sup>

In 1924 the Caution School was closed for the year on June 29<sup>th</sup>. That day there was a picnic dinner on the school grounds with a program following the dinner. Student prizes were given by the teacher, Mrs. Clara Cox Tyree, to students who had earned the highest marks in various contests. Dorothy Willburn received a prize for having gathered, pressed, mounted, and identified the greatest number of wildflowers and shrubs. Martena Willburn received the prize for the greatest improvement in writing. Calvin Willburn won the drawing contest. Many

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<sup>9</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 150.

<sup>10</sup> “Zenith Items”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 27, 1906.

<sup>11</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 125.

<sup>12</sup> *School District Enrollments*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>13</sup> “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 23.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

<sup>15</sup> *School District Disbursements and Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>16</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 150.



people from the community were present for the dinner including several from the Willburn family as well as the Duncans, Betts, and Smith families.<sup>17</sup>

The name “Caution” was mentioned again in the 1937-38 school year in reference to the Long Ridge School. The notation in the historic school enrollment records reads as “Long Ridge, Caution”. Indeed, the school board members for Long Ridge School District during the years 1935 to 1938 all had post office addresses in the town of Caution.<sup>18</sup> An explanation for this may be that the Long Ridge School was located in a district which at that time was called “Caution School District” as evidenced by an undated historical map, located at the Trinity County Office of Education, which indicates the Caution School District encompassed the Long Ridge area (see map above). The district was located east of the Zenia School District, South of the Ruth School District, and in Lassik ancestral territory, an Athabaskan Indian tribe.



*The “Caution School Bus”, left to right: Gladys Willburn Parker, Dorothy Willburn, unknown, Bill and Warren “Bud” Willburn, unknown. The Willburn children’s mother was Postmaster at Caution.*

Curiously, the Caution School has also been referred to, likely erroneously, as the “North Fork School”. This may have just been a reference to its location near the North Fork of the Eel River because the only “North Fork School District” known in Trinity county school records was

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<sup>17</sup> “Caution Items”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 14, 1934.

<sup>18</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 147.

located in Helena, some distance away. The school was also said to be called the “Pumpkin Center” by Irene Willburn whose mother, Francis Willburn, used to attend there.<sup>19</sup>

We know that a “Mrs. Dearing” taught at the Caution School.<sup>20</sup> Other teachers known to have taught at Caution and the months and years they were in attendance during an official visit by the Trinity County Of Education are listed below:

1915, October - Alzora Haight

1916, October - Hettie S. Lowden

1917, October – S. B. Chesmet

1918, October - Hettie S. Lowden

1920, June – Anita Ernestina Van Matre

1921, August - Mayme Brother

See also **Hettenshaw and Long Ridge Schools.**

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<sup>19</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed November 4, 2022, 149.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## Hettenshaw School District

“Hetten” comes from the Wintu word “xetin”, an edible bulb, like a potato. “Shaw” or “Sawe” means song. Therefore, the Hettenshaw Valley for which the school was named, means “Song of the little Indian potato”.<sup>21</sup>

The School District has a complicated history which is hard to sort out, especially given the different locations said to house the school as well as the different school names involved.

In August of 1874, a petition was presented to the Trinity County Board of Supervisors (acting as the Board of Education at that time in history) from the citizens of Hettenshaw to establish a school district there. At the time there was no school at Caution or Long Ridge so the children from the North Fork basin often boarded with relatives in the Valley to attend school there.”<sup>22</sup> The board agreed and a new district was formed. The district boundary was determined to be as follows:

... all that portion of Trinity county [sic] lying South of a line drawn from the head of the South Fork of Trinity river [sic], on the Eastern boundary of the county to a point on the Western boundary of the county crossed by Van Duzen’s creek, be and the same is hereby established as Hettenshaw School District.<sup>23</sup>

A woman by the name of Irene Willburn Stapp was interviewed [no date] and noted that there was a school in “Hettenshaw Valley” in the late 1800s. This had to be Hettenshaw School District as opposed to Hetten Valley School District because the Hetten Valley School District did not yet exist at that time. She said that the school was located on “Shop Hill just to the Northwest of the old Wilburn place”. She further described the location as, “to the east of the county road along the west side of Hettenshaw Valley where it goes up and over a small rise in the road. It was a one-room school.” Irene's mother had been born in 1889, and went to school there with the older Frank Wilburn.

In 1890-1891, the teacher was a 21-year-old man ‘from the public schools in Marin and Humboldt County’, D. J. Hall.<sup>24</sup> He left teaching soon after to become the Trinity County District Attorney.<sup>25</sup>

In the spring of 1892, the new teacher at Hettenshaw was Robert Marshall. His parents organized a party in his honor due to this new teaching assignment. They called it a “Pea-Nut Party” and was considered a “notable event of the season” as the idea for the party was quite

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<sup>21</sup> Bright, William, *1500 California Place Names, Their Origin and Meaning*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998. 66; “Indian Names in Trinity Co.”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 19, 1916.

<sup>22</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 8, 1874; and Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed November 4, 2022, 157 -160.

<sup>23</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 8, 1874.

<sup>24</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 152; and “D. J. Hall”, *The Trinity Journal*, September 9, 1890.

<sup>25</sup> 9/27/1890 and June 3, 1899.

new for the participants. On entering the party, guests were presented with “a handsome souvenir receptacle for holding pea-nuts”. The party description continues:

At the word all commenced to hunt, the nuts being secreted all over the house; from cellar to garret a reign of confusion followed; topsy-turvy could not describe the scene. Miss Alice Flagg having found the most was awarded the first prize and Mr. Richard Gribble the second. Conversation cards were next introduced, the ladies holding the cards as judges. Two minutes was allowed each gentleman to find out and tell what he knew of pumpkins and babies. At the close, a vote was taken by the ladies as to who was the best conversationalist on the above subjects. Mr. Robert Carter received first choice and Mr. Henry Morris second. On a vote being taken by the gentlemen as to who was the best lady conversationalist, Miss Annie Griffith was first choice and Miss Lizzie Fox second. At the conclusion cake and chocolate were served, making a delicious lunch. All enjoyed themselves immensely, for how could they otherwise.<sup>26</sup>

The record of an official school visit noted that in 1895 the school district of Hettenshaw was held in Hettenshaw Valley with teacher Elizabeth (Lizzie) E. Taylor with a salary of \$70 a month. There were 14 students enrolled, but only eight were present at the time of the visit, with an average attendance of 11.<sup>27</sup>

On June 10, 1897, Joseph F. McKnight visited the School in his role as the Deputy Superintendent of Schools. He observed 12 students present out of the 30 enrolled, still under the guidance of teacher Miss Taylor. At this point, Miss Taylor was only receiving a salary of \$60 per month with no explanation as to why it would be less than what she was making before. Perhaps it was a funding issue. At the time the condition of the school building and grounds, as well as the order and attention of the students were reported as “Good”.<sup>28</sup> The Trinity Journal reported that in May of the same year (1897), the school was held at the “Hettenshaw schoolhouse” for six months, and then in the concluding two months it was anticipated that it would be held “on Mad River” with J. F. McKnight as the teacher.<sup>29</sup> Mr. McKnight continued teaching there for the fall term of 1897. The Post Office Box of the school at the time was “Hetten”.<sup>30</sup>

To confirm the location of the school, in 1898 the “Hettenshaw School House in Hettenshaw Valley” was mentioned in election information in the local paper as a polling place for voters.<sup>31</sup>

In May of 1899, there was an interesting legal controversy involving the school. The voters of the Hettenshaw School District were to elect a new school board member. One advertisement

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<sup>26</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, April 2, 1897.

<sup>27</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 14; and “Fox, Lizzie, H., “Our Public Schools”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 17, 1895.

<sup>27</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 14; and “Fox, Lizzie, H., “Our Public Schools”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 17, 1895.

<sup>28</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 53.

<sup>29</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, May 29, 1897.

<sup>30</sup> Fox, Lizzie, “Districts, Clerks and Teachers”, *The Trinity Journal*, October 2, 1897.

<sup>31</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, August 13, 1898.



indicated that the election was to be held at “the Poison Camp Schoolhouse” [later the name “Poison Camp” was changed to “Zenía”] on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. On the same day, an election was also to be held at the schoolhouse in Hettenshaw for the same purpose. At the Poison Camp election, the voters chose Mr. Counts, while at Hettenshaw the voters chose H. D. Willburn. Both certificates of election were forwarded to School Superintendent Lizzie Fox. She filed the certificate of Mr. Counts and recognized him as the new school trustee. The controversy went to court. The issue was that some believed that the Hettenshaw School site was the legal place to hold an election as the site had been established many years before in Hettenshaw Valley. But others held that on July 27, 1897 at a meeting of the electors of the district, a vote was taken to move the site of the Hettenshaw schoolhouse to Poison Camp. The vote was 16 to zero. The issue went to court and Judge T. E. Jones determined that Mr. Counts was the legally elected trustee. In the judge’s opinion about the matter, he said that the schools were 20 miles apart, but both were in the same school district because the Board of Supervisors had refused to make Poison Camp its own district even though it had enough students to do so.

In 1897 the board did indeed turn down the request to make Poison Camp School its own district apart from Hettenshaw, and the local paper mentioned in November of 1897, that “The public school at Poison Camp, [in] Hettenshaw District, closed on November 12 for the winter break. The teacher there that fall term had been Mr. Henry M. Marvel.<sup>32</sup> However, reports on this incident are the only evidence that has been found of a school district by the name of Poison Camp.

Two years later, in June of 1899, the Hettenshaw school was visited by the Superintendent of Schools. It was noted that John S. Reid had taught there in the Autumn of 1898 and Mr. Joseph F. McKnight most recently taught there in the spring of 1899. The salary had gone up to \$65. There were 17 students enrolled and 12 students present on the day of the visit. The address was then written as “Zenía P. O. Poison Camp”. The school building and grounds were reported as being “Very Good”.<sup>33</sup> Mr. Reid was still teaching at the school in the spring of 1903.<sup>34</sup>

In 1900, a boundary change occurred, annexing some territory from the Long Ridge School District to the Hettenshaw School District. The petition had been signed by “heads of families” in both districts representing 78 children under the age of 17 years. The new Hettenshaw boundary touched on both the line between Mendocino and Trinity County, and between Tehama County and Trinity County in the very south eastern area of Trinity.<sup>35</sup>

In a school visit in October 1906, the Hettenshaw School, listed as “Hettenshaw, Poison Camp”, had an enrollment that had increased to 47 students. This influx of students was possibly due to another school closing and those students transferring to the Hettenshaw School. The salary for the teacher, Mr. Henry Marvel, was \$70 per month and the school building was still considered in good shape at that time.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 13, 1897.

<sup>33</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 101.

<sup>34</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, March 28, 1903.

<sup>35</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, January 27, 1900.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

In 1910, teacher Miss Agnes R. Dedrick closed the school on November 4 for the winter break. A month later she accepted a position as a private teacher for a local family in Minersville.<sup>37</sup> On March 11, 1912, teacher Miss Mary Louise Joseph of Indian Creek opened the Hettenshaw School for the spring term.<sup>38</sup> In early July of 1912, teacher Miss Elsie Holtorf opened the school for the fall term.<sup>39</sup> In another official school visit in 1912, the condition of the school was reported to be “Poor” and a note said that the school needed a new building as well as new furniture. The school’s enrollment had plunged to just 10 students.<sup>40</sup> In February of 1913, Martha E. Willburn was paid \$8.00 for janitorial work.<sup>41</sup> Following the 1912-13 school year, Hettenshaw School was listed under the Caution School District section of the Trinity County Office of Education’s historical disbursement book with the location said to be in Caution.<sup>42</sup>

On a school visit in August 1914, the Hettenshaw school’s enrollment was reported to be little improved with a total of 13 students. Hettie S. Lowden was the teacher with an \$80 salary. She was a brand new teacher at the time having only taught for four months at this district and nowhere else prior to that. At the time, classes were held in what was referred to as an “unfinished building” that needed more windows, needed water, and only had a “limited” library,<sup>43</sup> so it appears that the Hettenshaw School had likely moved to a new building or a new location – perhaps to the town of Caution. In fact, in the local paper, a polling place was listed as “Hettenshaw School House (new building)”.<sup>44</sup>

Later that year, on November 10, 1914, a portion of the Hettenshaw School District was carved out for a new school to be called Hettenshaw School District by order of the Board of Supervisors.<sup>45</sup> This is presumed to be later known as the Hettenshaw Valley School District.

Interestingly, in 1915, Caution School was referred to as “Caution (Hettenshaw)” in the disbursement records. In another source, it says that Caution became known as Hettenshaw.<sup>46</sup> To clear up this confusion, an article was found in the local paper, in January of 1915, that the Board of Supervisors had approved a petition to rename the “Hettenshaw School District” the “Caution School District”.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, in April of 1915, a note was made in the warrants, “Hettenshaw changed to Caution”, with the address of Hoaglin.<sup>48</sup>

By April of 1916, the school was fully referred to as Caution, location Caution in all educational records.<sup>49</sup>

A school bell was purchased originally for the Hettenshaw School District, then given to the Caution School (which was likely the Hettenshaw School renamed Caution), and then it was

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<sup>37</sup> “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 19, 1910 and December 10, 1910.

<sup>38</sup> “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 6, 1912.

<sup>39</sup> “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 7, 1912.

<sup>40</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 433.

<sup>41</sup> *Register of School Warrants*, February 28, 1913, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 292.

<sup>42</sup> *Disbursements book*, Historic Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>43</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 496.

<sup>44</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, October 17, 1914.

<sup>45</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 10, 1914.

<sup>46</sup> Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College. 31.

<sup>47</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, January 16, 1915.

<sup>48</sup> *Warrant Records*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1915.

<sup>49</sup> Disbursement Records, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

moved on to the Long Ridge School. The bell was said to be over two hundred pounds and was moved by pack mule.<sup>50</sup>

Michael Frasier, the brother of Peggy Canale, long-time Superintendent of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District, and Michael's wife Tammy (Willburn) Frasier, now own the parcel where the last Hettenshaw School stood. It is also believed by the local community that the last students who had attended Hettenshaw School were eventually sent to Mad River/Ruth School when Hettenshaw closed. Mad river/Ruth School then closed around 1969 and the students were sent to Van Duzen School which is now a part of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District.<sup>51</sup>

See also **Caution School, Hetten Valley School, Ruth School, and Van Duzen School Districts.**



*Hettenshaw School 1915*

### Hetten Valley School District

According to one source, Hetten Valley School was in operation in 1876 along with 14 other school districts.<sup>52</sup> This information, however, does not hold true in the historic records at the Trinity County Office of Education which show Hetten Valley appearing in the warrant records (the record of bills paid) in the 1913-1914 school year and not before. Another reference said the school was first organized in the school year of 1914-15 and located at the head of the Van

<sup>50</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 151 & 158.

<sup>51</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Superintendent of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District, January 4, 2022.

<sup>52</sup> "Trinity County Schools Growing With California", *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition.

Duzen River.<sup>53</sup> While it's possible that the school began in the 1800s as a private school, paid for by the parents of the children who attended, 1914 appears to be the year this district began. Indeed, on November 10, 1914, a petition was received by the Board of Supervisors to create a new school district called Hetten School District. This new district would be carved out of a portion of the Hettenshaw School District. That petition was approved. The boundaries of the new district are described as follows:

...beginning at the southwest corner of Section 19 Twp. 3 S. R. 8 E. H. M. and running thence west 6 miles to the southwest corner of section 19 Twp. 3 S. R. 7 E. H. M. thence north 4 miles to northwest corner of Section 6 Twp. 3 S. R. 7 E. H. M. (which is the northeast corner of the Zenia school district) thence running west about 6 miles to the west boundary line of Trinity county, thence north along county boundary line 12 miles more or less to the southern boundary of Twp. 1 N. R. 6 E. H. M. thence east along the south boundary of Twp. 1 N. R. 6 E. H. M. a distance of about 3 1/2 miles, to the top of the divide between Van Duzen and Mad River, thence in a southeasterly direction along the top of the divide between Mad river and Van Duzen and Mad river and North Fork of Eel river, (said last mentioned line being the west boundary line of the Mad river school district) to the point of beginning.<sup>54</sup>

An election notice regarding a bond in the sum of \$600 to purchase a lot and build a schoolhouse for the new Hetten School District was in the local paper in June of 1915.<sup>55</sup> In the end, a tax was levied on each \$100 of assessed property value for the benefit of the Hetten School District.<sup>56</sup>

Hetten Valley School District was visited by several people from the Trinity County Office of Education on October 10, 1916. Eleanor Varley was the teacher and her salary was \$80 per month. She had only been teaching since September. There were eleven students enrolled and eleven students in attendance that day. In the documentation of the visit, the order and attendance record of the students were listed as "Good" and so was the progress in their studies. It was indicated that it was a new district and that the property did not belong to the school. The building was good, "but limited".<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> "A Short History of the Schools of Trinity County", Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956. 5.

<sup>54</sup> "Minutes of Board of Supervisors", *The Trinity Journal*, November 11, 1914.

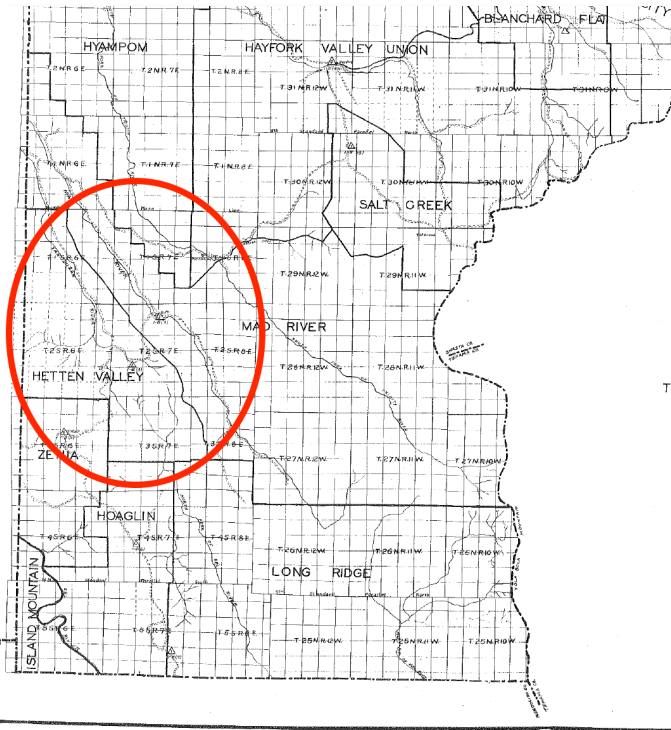
<sup>55</sup> "Election Notice for District School Bonds", *The Trinity Journal*, June 15, 1915.

<sup>56</sup> "County Rate Remains at \$2.50", *The Trinity Journal*, September 11, 1915.

<sup>57</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 547.

In 1917 the students were taught by teacher Mary Dickey. The visit notes indicate that the school building was in good shape. A year later, in 1918 another visit occurred and still Miss

Dickey was the teacher. This fact alone is unusual as most teachers in Trinity County during this time period came and went quickly. Often there was a teacher in the spring term different from the fall term of the same school year. The notes from that visit indicated that the school building was “fair”.<sup>58</sup> An article in the local paper in April of 1918 referred to Hetten Valley School as “Trinity’s newest district”.<sup>59</sup>



Hetten Valley School District is indicated in the 1947 map

By April of 1918, the teacher was Mrs. H. A. Deering who opened the school on the 1<sup>st</sup> for the spring term. It was mentioned in the local paper that Hetten Valley was “Trinity’s newest district.”<sup>60</sup>

Another visit occurred in October 1919. By now the teacher was Nellie B. Shuford. She had a Trinity County Teaching Certificate which was an option at the

time. Her salary was \$90 per month and she had only four students enrolled. All were present at the time of the visit. Their order and attendance were recorded as “good” while the methods and zeal of the teacher were “average”, and so was the condition of the outbuildings.<sup>61</sup> Miss Shuford went on to teach the next year at the Grass Valley School District.<sup>62</sup>

The school was suspended (temporarily closed) for the 1920-21 school year. This may be because it did not operate for the full 120 required days the year before, rather than due to a lack of enrollment. A handwritten notation in the Trinity County Statistics of Elementary Schools says, “can’t count Caution and Hetten Valley as they did not have 120 days.”<sup>63</sup> However, the school was operating again a year later and continued at least into the 1950s.<sup>64</sup> A year after the suspension, a fifth visit was held in June 1922. A new teacher had been hired by the name of Mrs. Olive A. Maron (an approximate spelling as the handwriting is not clear). The salary had increased by now to \$120 per month for the teaching of eight students. The student’s progress in their studies was either good or excellent depending on the subject area. Interestingly, under “Condition of School Building and Grounds” it was written, “Have none” and the needs of the school included a list of items such as desks, maps, a flag, and a clock, and included [a] “school house” as well.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 577.

<sup>59</sup> “In the Local Field”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 1, 1918.

<sup>60</sup> “In the Local Field”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 1, 1918.

<sup>61</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 37.

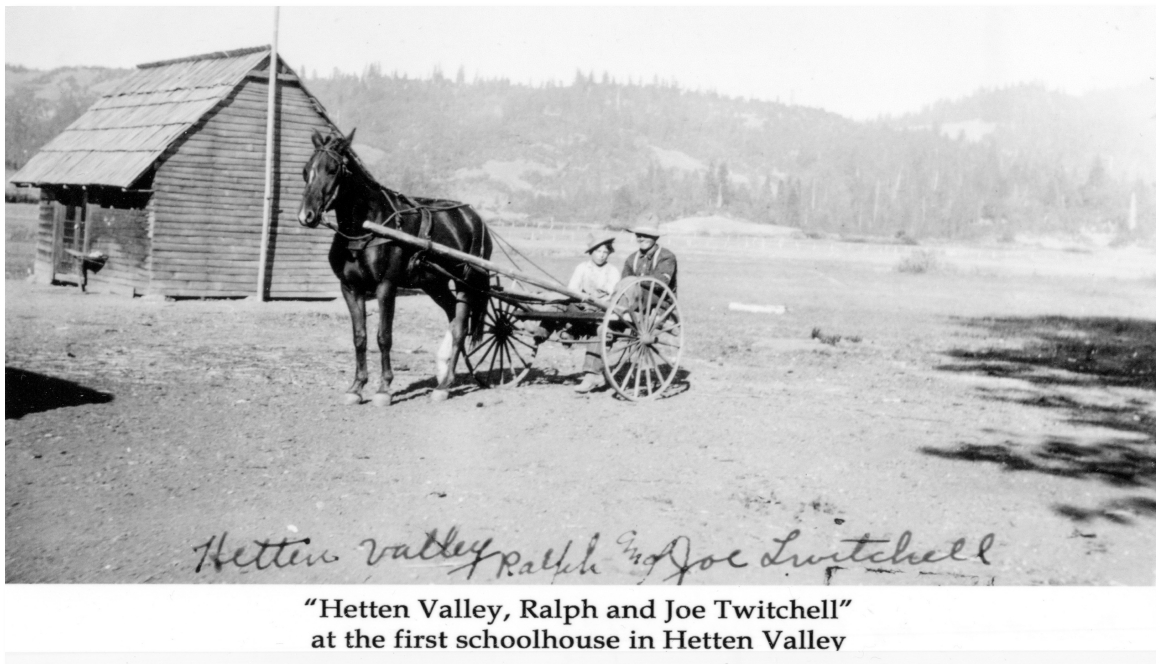
<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>63</sup> “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 13.

<sup>64</sup> *Annual Reports of the Conditions of the Public Schools of in the County of Trinity*, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>65</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 103.

Just a year later, in July of 1923, Hettie S. Lowden was the teacher, having come from Long Ridge School where she taught in 1917. She earned a salary of \$130 per month. There were only five students enrolled. By now the “Condition of the School Building and Grounds” was listed as “Poor” and the wants of the school still included “[a] New Building”.<sup>66</sup> A year later, in August 1924, yet another visit occurred. There were still only five students. The notes also indicate that the schoolhouse had burned and the school was temporarily taking place in the home of the “Cross family” which was said to be too small for use as a school.<sup>67</sup> Given that these were not the best circumstances for learning, it is not a surprise that the teacher’s “Methods and Zeal” was listed only as “Fair” and the students were receiving an F in all subject areas at that time.



*Hetten Valley School, First Schoolhouse 1915*

Between 1916 and 1924 there were a total of nine visits to the school, sometimes in the same year and just a month apart. Given the fact that only 4 to 8 students were enrolled during any one of those visits, it’s likely that the County Superintendent wanted to keep an eye on the school’s enrollment to determine if the school was still able to be funded with so few students. Curiously, the school (location noted as Ruth) was suspended on July 10, 1924, and then reestablished that very same day.<sup>68</sup>

Things began looking up, at least academically, as evidenced by the records of a school visit in July of 1925. A new schoolhouse had been built. Hettie S. Lowden had continued as the teacher

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>68</sup> “School District Disbursements & Receipts”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.



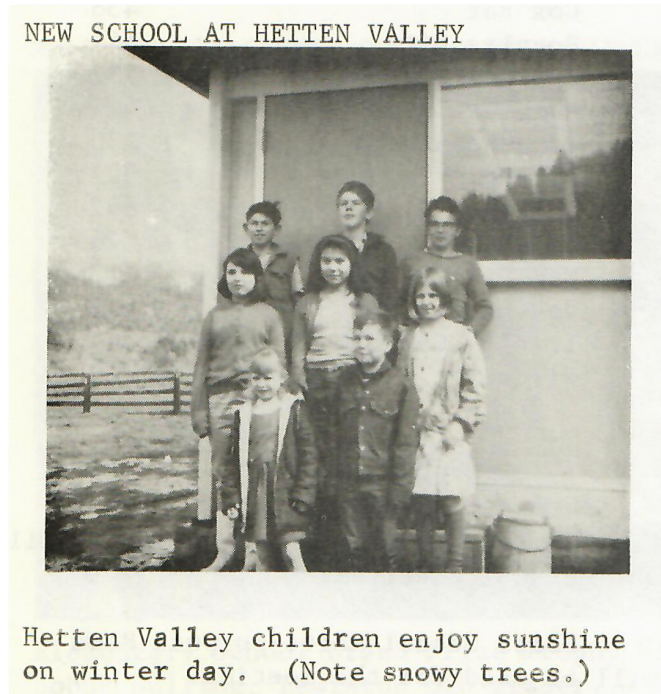
and was making \$140 per month. The “Methods and Zeal of the Teacher” was listed as “good” along with the student's progress in all subject areas.<sup>69</sup>

From August 1928 through September 1932, Hagel Kelley was teaching five to eight students at Hetten Valley. Her salary fluctuated from \$140 per month in 1928, to \$150 in 1930, and then down to \$145 per month in 1932 when her name also changed to Hagel Kelly Willburn.<sup>70</sup>

In 1943 the schoolhouse was said to have burned and a new building was constructed.<sup>71</sup>

In 1966, a picture in the County Superintendent of Schools Newsletter (see photo on right) indicated that a new schoolhouse had been built for the Hetten Valley School,<sup>72</sup> When the Hetten Valley School was closed, it is believed that this may be the building that was eventually moved to Van Duzen, possibly around 1969 or 1970, and is now used as the preschool.<sup>73</sup> The Hetten Valley School was eventually absorbed into the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District.

See also [Hettenshaw School District](#).



*New School at Hetten Valley, 1966, as pictured in the May 1966 Newsletter of the County Superintendent of Schools and was the building that is believed to have moved to Van Duzen.*

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<sup>69</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 191.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 267, 316, and 368.

<sup>71</sup> “A Short History of the Schools of Trinity County, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956, 5.

<sup>72</sup> “New School at Hetten Valley”, County Superintendent of Schools Newsletter, May, 1966, 6.

<sup>73</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Superintendent of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District, October 23, 2023.

Students at Hetten Valley School: (Top Row) Roxy Chester and Patty Gallagher (Middle Row) Nancy Duncan, Wanda Gallagher, John Chester and Pat Duncan (Bottom Row) Chuck Duncan, Glennis Duncan and Norma Duncan (On the Merry go Round ) Lonnie Chester. Picture was taken May 1960. Photo courtesy of Peggy Canale.



Hetten Valley School, Rose Katt, teacher, and her 11 students, April 1962





*Hetten Valley School 1956*



*Photo of the old Hetten Valley Schoolhouse, taken in 1967, shows signs of deterioration*

## Hettenpome School District Eventually Changed to Hoaglin School District

According to historical records, Hoaglin School District was established as one of the county's public schools in 1915. However, it began its existence as Hettenpome School and the date of that school's origins is difficult to establish.



*"Old Hoaglin School on Shannon Property" Courtesy of Peggy Canale*

Below is a recording of the dates and locations of the Hettenpome/Hettenpom and Hoaglin School Districts as found in the sources that could be located:

1. In about 1890 a school was said to have moved from Long Ridge to the south end of Kettenpom Valley, located about a mile north of Hoaglin. The school at that time was named Hettenpome.<sup>74</sup> According to two sources, Hettenpome was an alternative spelling of the Wintu word "Kettenpom" which means "Little Indian Potato land".<sup>75</sup>
2. In 1892 and again in 1898, the Hettenpome Schoolhouse was used as a polling place for an election.<sup>76</sup>
3. The Trinity County Superintendent of Schools visited the public school named Hettenpome in 1900, 1902, 1904, 1909, and 1913, but no school records prior to that indicate that it was a public school receiving state monies.
4. At one point the school was referred to as "Hettenpome nee Long Ridge" in the historic school fund register located at the Trinity County Office of Education. "Née", a French

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<sup>74</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed November 4, 2022. 152-155.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., and "Indian Names in Trinity Co.", *The Trinity Journal*, August 19, 1916.

<sup>76</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, February 13, 1892 and September 3, 1898.



term, means that the school was originally called Long Ridge, but this has not been confirmed by another source.

5. This school functioned under the name Hettenpome until the 1907-08 school year when the “e” was dropped from the ending of the name, making the name of the school “Hettenpom”, although not all school records followed this convention.<sup>77</sup>
6. The Hettenpom School was said to have moved from Long Ridge to Hoaglin Valley in the historic school district warrants, stating “Hettenpome changed to Hoaglin”.<sup>78</sup>
7. In January of 1915, a petition was submitted by the residents of the Hettenpome School District to the Board of Supervisors asking to officially change the name to Hoaglin School District. The petition was approved.<sup>79</sup>
8. The school by the name of Hettenpom had its last funding disbursements occurring during the 1916-17 school year.
9. In some references, the same school was referred to as “Hoaglin Valley”.<sup>80</sup>



*Hoaglin School 1947, Graduation Picnic for Carol Newmaker. Back row: Jean Lampley, Carol Newmaker, teacher Margaret Burgess Potter, Jackie Wedell, Bob Potter; Front row: Shirley Lampley, Marilyn Potter, Dean Moore*

In any event, the Hoaglin School was certainly called by different names and may have existed in several different locations at different times in history according to the information below.

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<sup>77</sup> *District Warrants*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>78</sup> *District Warrants, and School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 520.

<sup>79</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 16, 1915.

<sup>80</sup> “The Students of Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, *One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County*, 2008.

While in Hoaglin Valley the school was located on the Holtorf Ranch on the Kettenpom Valley road. "J. and H. Holtorf" owned most of the Hoaglin Valley at this time. This is also the location where the school burned in a fire in 1911. Prior to being rebuilt, the school was held in the "Old Clem Cabin". When it was rebuilt in 1915 the new schoolhouse was said to be a one-story medium gable structure, resting on wooden blocks with "a hip roof entry porch and the use of a dentil molding [which] are exceptional features of this building..."

Sitting in the middle of a large overgrazed field is the old one-room Hoaglin schoolhouse. It looks like a classic example of an abandoned prairie schoolhouse. It was built in 1915 after an earlier school had burned. The use of this building as a school was not regular, for the doors were sometimes closed for lack of students. The original part of the school is a one-story medium gable structure. A cross-gable has been added to the rear and the entire building rests on wooden blocks. The roof's original shingles are exposed in large patches where newer tin has been torn off. A hip roof entry porch and the use of a dentil [i.e.: dentil] molding are exceptional features of this building which is located in a very rural, functionally oriented area.<sup>81</sup>

The Hoaglin School burned down again in May of 1917, but "a new one will replace it, to be in charge of Mrs. Gertrude Gronemeyer, teacher."<sup>82</sup> Apparently, it was not only replaced but also improved because in 1920, the Superintendent of Schools visited the school and declared it the "Best kept schoolhouse in the county."<sup>83</sup>

In an interview with May Gray [no date], she said the following:

We girls attended Hoaglin School, a three-mile walk from our home on Bluff Creek. It's a beautiful country and our memories of school days are very pleasant. Most of the children came from greater distances, riding horseback to school. As I remember, eighteen was the largest attendance while we were there. The schoolhouse was built of hand-hewn logs. It burned in 1917 and was rebuilt the same year.

The school was the center of much of the social life, old-fashioned dances, etc., being held there. Whole families attended from miles around. They brought quilts to put the small ones to sleep on, in a corner of the room. Everyone brought sandwiches and cakes. They made coffee in a five-gallon can for a midnight supper. It was an all-night affair beings [sic] it was too dark to travel the rough trails home on horseback. There was always plenty of food for a snack in the morning before leaving for home at sun up. The music was a violin with a guitar accompaniment and a caller to call changes for quadrilles.

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<sup>81</sup> Jones, Alice Goen, Ed., *Trinity County Historical Sites*, Trinity County Historical Society, 1981, 351; and Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 154.

<sup>82</sup> "Schools are opening", *The Trinity Journal*, August 27, 1917.

<sup>83</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 62.

When we first attended Hoaglin School, it was in session only seven months of the year. Winter was too stormy for traveling.<sup>84</sup>

In an interview with Chuck Hall, who attended Hoaglin School in the 1940s, he rode to school on “chicken-feed” horses. He said that not only did students take their own lunch, but they also had to take their own hay and grain to feed the horses during the school day.<sup>85</sup>



*Hoaglin Valley School Building pictured in 1978*

Bertha Martin taught school at Hoaglin for five years until 1941.<sup>86</sup> In 1941, the school opened at what was called the Heller Highwater Ranch. Later the school moved to a log cabin up the hill on the Wixson property and continued at that location until approximately 1958.<sup>87</sup>

In 1945, a new school building was constructed, and in the summer of 1955 a new teacherage was built. The enrollment of the school at that time was 18 students with Miss Hannah Watson as teacher. The trustees were Mrs. Kathleen Wixson, Mrs. Elizabeth Wedel, and Mrs. Polly McEwen.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “The Students of Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, *One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County*, 2008.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022. 153.

<sup>87</sup> The Students of Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, *One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County*, 2008.

<sup>88</sup> “A Short History of the Schools in Trinity County”, *The Trinity Journal*, 1956, 5.



According to an interview with Zelma Benninoven [no date], during the 1950s there was an increase in logging in the area and many small mills opened providing employment. Due to the logging, the roads were improved, reducing the isolation of the area. Due to the influx of people, the school hired an extra teacher and there were 40 students attending class in two sessions morning and afternoon.<sup>89</sup>



*"Hoaglin School 1952-1953, Located on the road to the Armstrong Place on the Witter Ranch". Back row: Shirley Lampley, Dennis Lewis; second row: Barbara Brownfield, Henry Wedell, Billie Clark; Front Row: ? Aho, ? Aho, Dorothy McEwen, ?, ?, Barbara Sturgis, Cynthia Clark, Larry Clark, ? Aho, Duane Burgess. Courtesy of Peggy Canale*

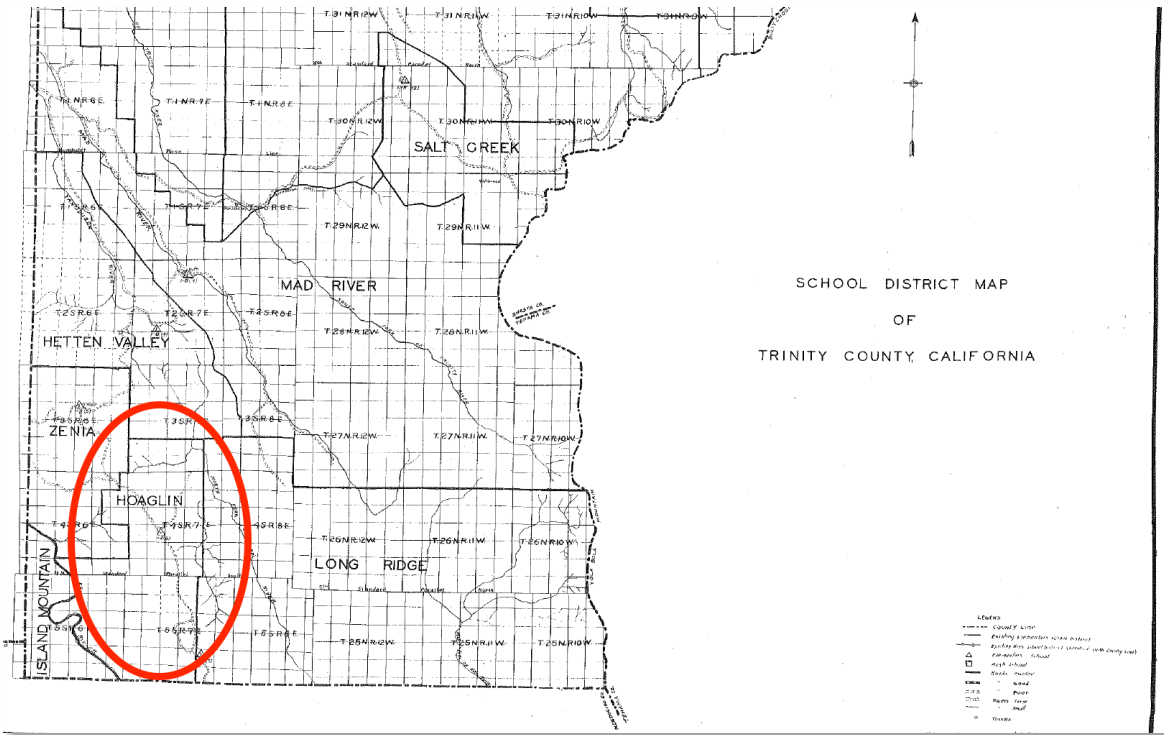
In March of 1959 the school was combined into the Hoaglin-Zenia Union School District<sup>90</sup> and later became an elementary school within the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District located in Mad River.

See also [Kettenpom](#) and [Zenia Schools](#).

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<sup>89</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed October 20, 2023. 155.

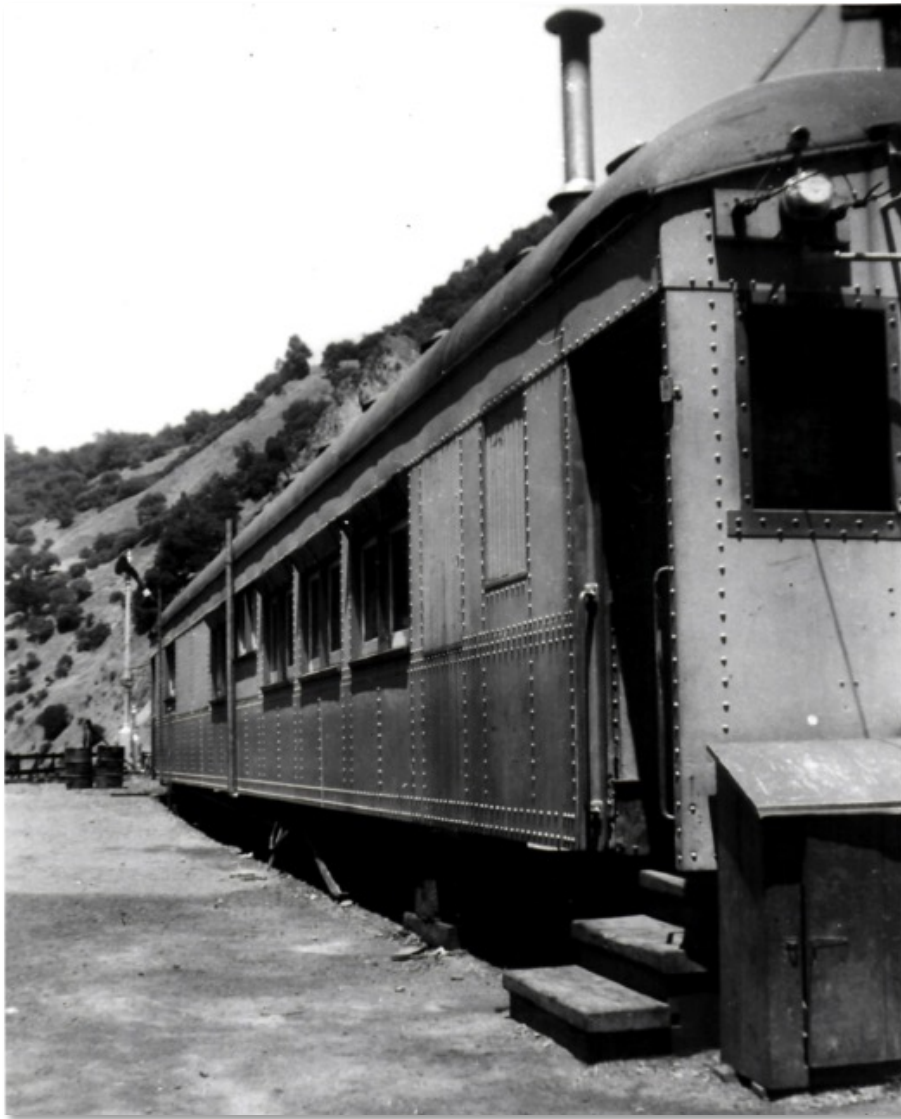
<sup>90</sup> "Hoaglin-Zenia School Opens", *The Trinity Journal*, March 12, 1959.



Map of District 1947, Trinity County Office of Education

## Island Mountain School District

The town of Island Mountain, in Lassik traditional territory, has a complicated history. A post office was originally established there when it was located in Humboldt County. It was named



for nearby Island Mountain Peak, 22 miles southeast of Garberville. It was named by settlers in the 1850s with the name “island” being particularly apt because it is an area nearly isolated by water from two creeks and the Eel River which cuts across the corner of Trinity County. Due to the resistance of the rock to erosion, the Eel River makes an abrupt “S” curve around the area.<sup>91</sup>

In 1907, the original post office was discontinued and it was moved ½ mile into Trinity County. At that point, the name was changed to Irma, for Irma Morrison who made a 25-mile trip by horseback, three times

a week, to carry the mail. On August 16, 1915, the Irma Post Office was discontinued and the name changed back to Island Mountain, Trinity County, before being discontinued in 1973, with the service moved to Garberville in Humboldt County.<sup>92</sup>

According to historical records stored at the Trinity County Office of Education, Island Mountain School District was organized in 1913-14. In 1917, there were 11 students enrolled and they were taught by Velma Canfield. Her salary was an unusually specific amount of \$62.50 per

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<sup>91</sup>“History and Happenings”, Southwest Shasta County Historical Group, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/?currentPage=2>. Accessed June 26, 2021.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.



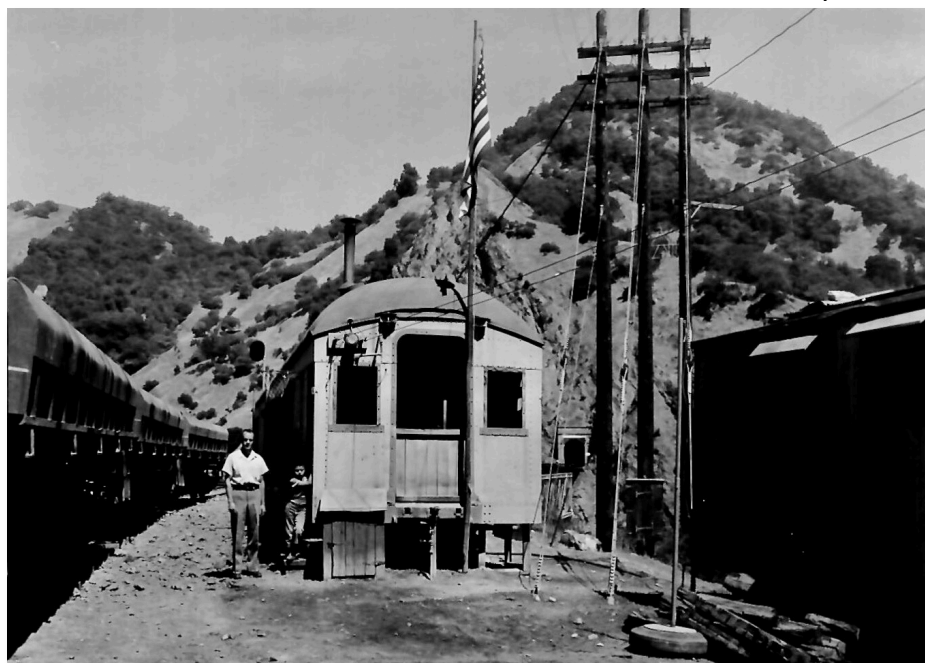
month. She had only three months total experience in teaching, yet all the students were making good or excellent progress and their “Order and Attention” was “Very Good”.<sup>93</sup>

In 1919 the teacher was Ruth Hamilton who had earned her diploma from the Humboldt State “Normal School” (a “Normal School” was an institution where teachers were trained). At this time there were only four students enrolled.<sup>94</sup> The school was suspended in November 1920, likely due to too few students, but was reestablished a year later.<sup>95</sup>

In June of 1922, the teacher was Cyrus Friedman who earned \$120 pr month with eight students enrolled. The condition of the school building and grounds was noted as being “Satisfactory”.<sup>96</sup> By August of that same year, the school building was reported as being “Poor” and a new building was listed as a need of the school.<sup>97</sup> The same was reported in a visit on July 22, 1923.<sup>98</sup>

The school was suspended again on July 10, 1924, and re-established on September 10, 1925. By April of 1926, Marguerite Willson was the teacher receiving a salary of \$130 per month. Curiously, at that time six students were enrolled but seven were present on the day of the visit. The teacher was reported as being not just good but “Excellent perfect” and the students were doing well in all subject areas.<sup>99</sup>

In March of 1927, the teacher was Mrs. Pearl Spaulding Longwell and she taught there until the end of 1929 when Alice E. Steele took over for the new school year. There were nine students



at that time and not only was the school building reported as being “Poor” but a larger building was also needed.<sup>100</sup> Alice Steele was still teaching there in September of 1930. The condition of the building had not changed and there were only five students. The “Methods and Zeal” of Miss Steele, however, was “Very

<sup>93</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 579.

<sup>94</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 40.

<sup>95</sup> Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 30.

<sup>96</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 104.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

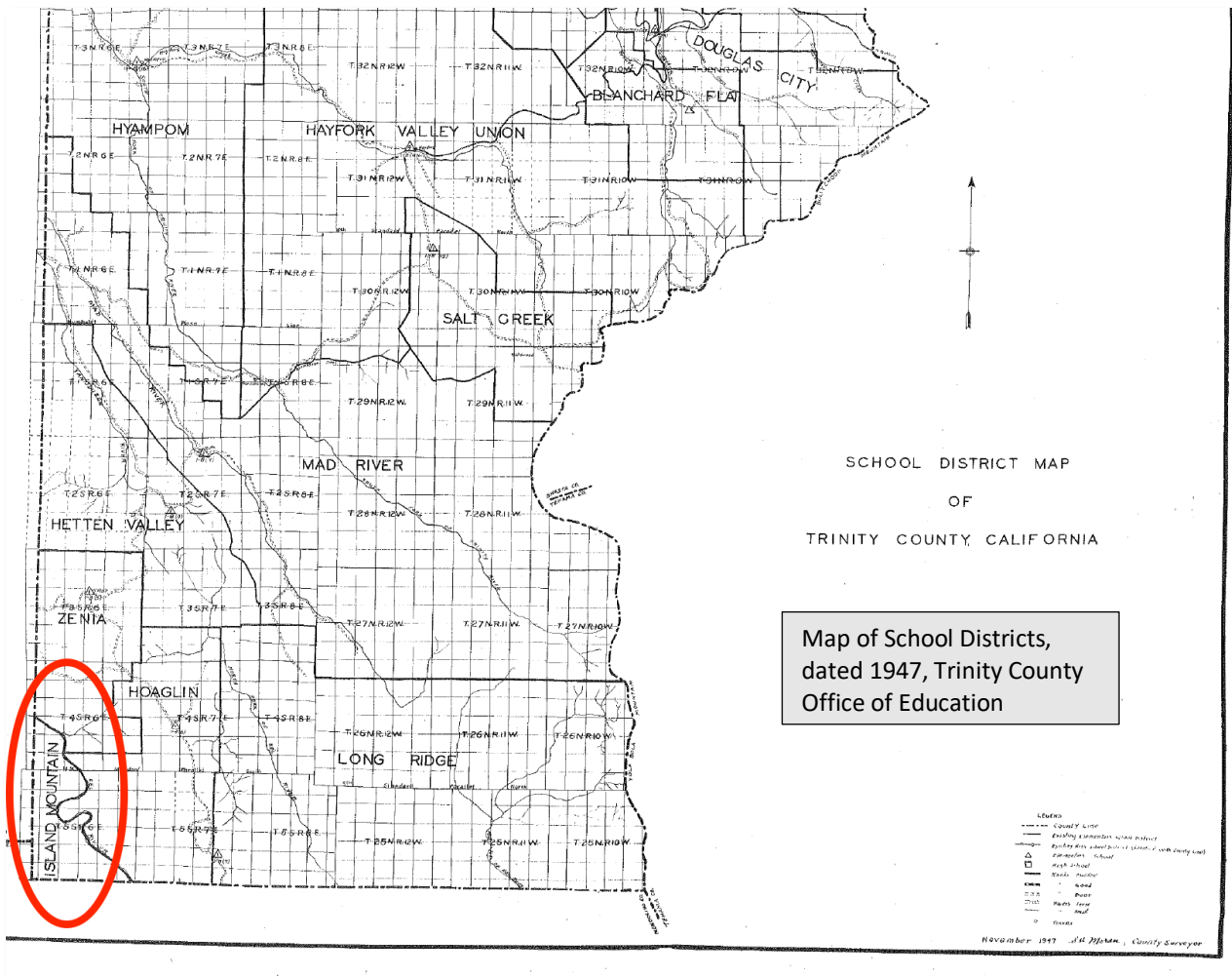
<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

Good”.<sup>101</sup> She continued at the school through 1931 until a new teacher, Alice E Jewett, took over in the fall of 1932. Something had changed, however, since the schoolhouse was now rated as being “Good”.<sup>102</sup> It’s unknown at this time if a new building was built, the old building was repaired, or if the school had moved.

Island Mountain School was suspended for a third time during the 1942-43 school year.<sup>103</sup>

The school was held in several different locations throughout the years, but in 1953, the Northwestern Pacific Railroad on the Eel River offered a steel passenger coach to be used as both a school and a teacherage (a place for the teacher to live).<sup>104</sup> By 1956, the school was being held at the railroad company in a train caboose for ten students.<sup>105</sup> Mr. Edward Franklin, formerly a resident of Minersville in Trinity County, was the teacher at that time. Trustees were Mrs. Rose Ward, Mrs. Roanna Beagle, and Mr. Carl E. Flanagan.<sup>106</sup>

The district closed for good in 1961.<sup>107</sup> This was the “only district in the county to have a railroad running through it and, at that, only seven miles”.<sup>108</sup>



Trinity County”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956, 5.

<sup>105</sup> Supahan, Sarah, communication with Jim French, retired Trinity County Superintendent of Schools, January 1, 2022.

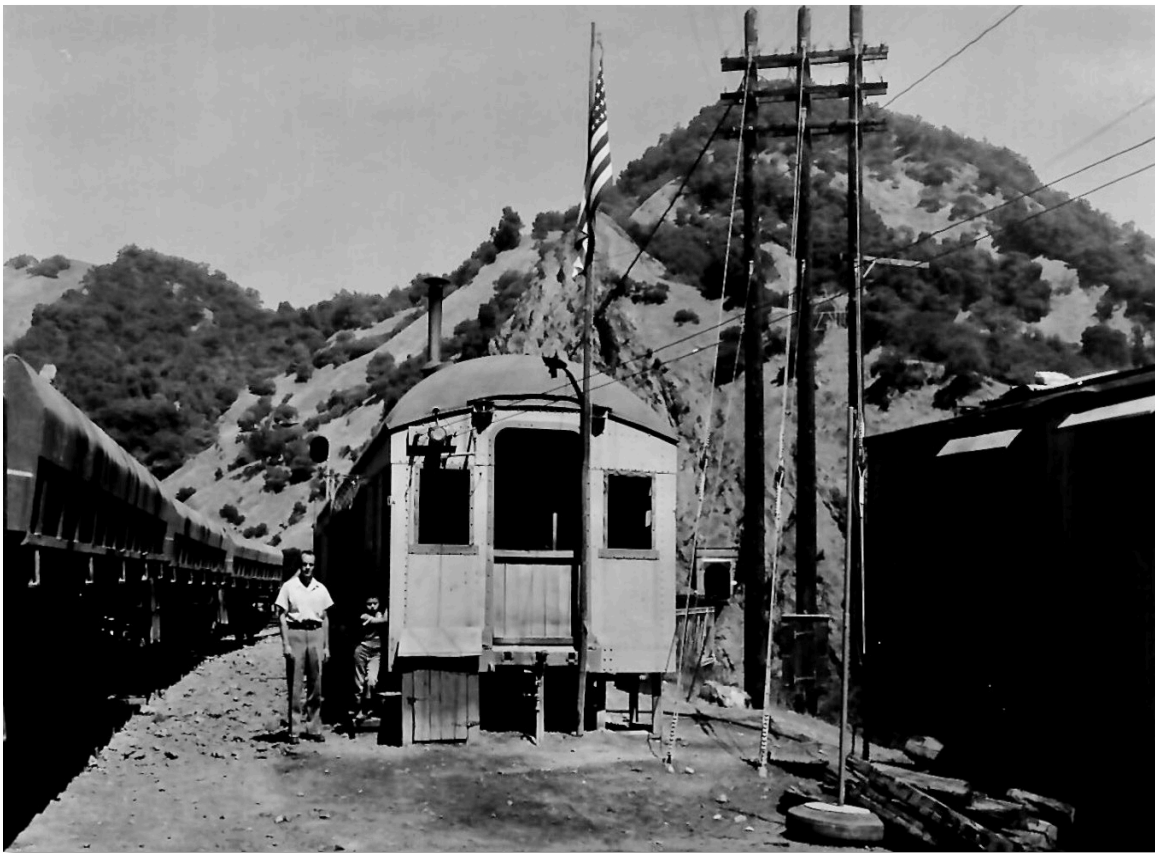
<sup>106</sup> “A Short History of the Schools in Trinity County”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956, 5.

<sup>107</sup> Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 30.

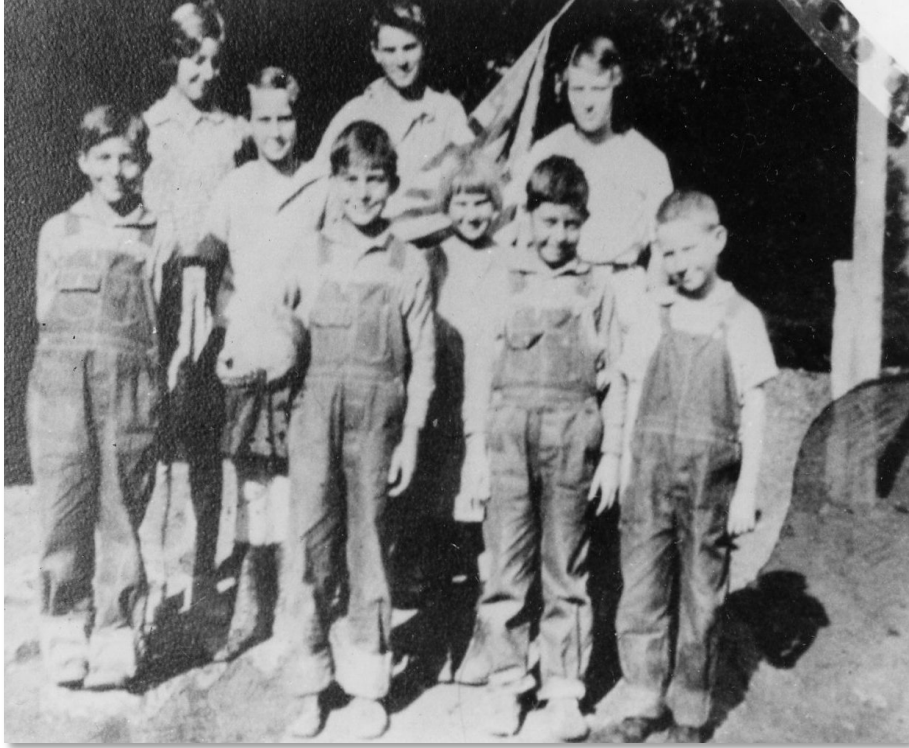
<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



*Above and below, dated 1956*







*Island Mountain 1931*



## Kettenpom Valley School

Kettenpom is a Wintu word meaning “little Indian potato land”, likely referencing the Ketten lily which grows in the area, the bulb of which is edible.<sup>109</sup> There is little information on the Kettenpom Valley School which had to have been a private school in the area, organized and paid for by the families of the students who attended.

There are only two sources of information found about this school. In one source, a man named Andrew Davis [no date] wrote:

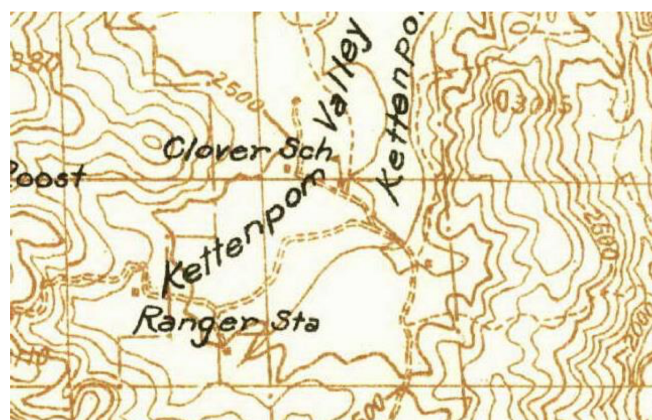
My brother, Leroy, and I walked six miles to the Kettenpom Valley School, when Leroy left school I rode horseback until School was held in our house. School was held there from 1907 until 1909 when the Simpson brothers built a schoolhouse [the Peak School] about one-mile northwest of Kettenpom Peak, then I went there.<sup>110</sup>

Another informant noted that:

Kettenpom Valley, six miles east, had the only school close to Seven Cedars. Each day the Davis children and neighboring students walked or rode horseback the round trip of 12 miles to school. No school was held from December to March because of the heavy snowfall in those years. From 1907 to 1909, school was held at the Davis home. Later on the Simpson brothers, who owned a homestead near Seven Cedars, put up a permanent log schoolhouse on the western slope of Kettenpom Peak, about one mile west of Seven Cedars.

In some references, it is believed that the same school was referred to as “the Clover School”.

See also [Hettenpome School](#)



Hoaglin Valley USGS map showing the Clover School located in Kettenpom Valley in 1931.

(A2: 23)

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[solararch.org](http://solararch.org)

<sup>109</sup> Jones, Alice Goen, Ed., “Trinity County Historic Sites”, Trinity County Historical Society, Weaverville, 1981, 349.

<sup>110</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed May 18, 2023. 162.

## Lake Mountain School District

The town of Lake Mountain was located 14 miles south of Hoaglin and about 20 miles north of Covelo, likely in Wailaki ancestral territory. The name was derived from the Lake Mountain Ranch. Strangely, the post office was originally established there in April of 1878, but was discontinued just a month later in May of 1878, then re-established in 1909. Later, in 1917 it was discontinued, re-established in 1920, discontinued in 1923, re-established again in 1936, and discontinued for the last time in 1953 and the service moved to Covelo.<sup>111</sup>

It appears that a private school began around 1908 when enough school-aged children were living in the Mina and Lake Mountain areas. A man by the name of Al Reed was credited with working to get the school organized. The school was built on the trail that ran from the Mina area to the "Horse Ranch". The school building was a pole frame covered and sided with split fir shakes. The floor was one-inch lumber and was likely hauled there from the Zeek Saw Mill in Hulls Valley. The first teacher was Ralph Everett of Lake Mountain himself. The students were "Kate Everett's children...Reed children and Emerson Harris". These were children from the Mina area and other children that lived at the Horse Ranch.<sup>112</sup>

According to school disbursement records found at the Trinity County Office of Education, Lake Mountain School District was officially established as a public school on January 6, 1925, in a homesteader's house, with a post office box address located in Hoaglin. Holding school in a homesteader's house was nothing unusual in the early days of schooling in Trinity County.

In southern Trinity, single ranches often carry the responsibility and identity for a whole area, either because of the character of the people or the location of the ranch or both. They are, or were, centers of activity and community affairs. Such is the case with Lake Mountain. It has had a school and a post office, and Leona Miller served as Deputy County Clerk for many years. The schoolhouse still stands



*Drawing of Lake Mountain School house by Lillian Pearl Hurd in the 1970s, found in "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County" by the students of Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, 2008, used with permission.*

<sup>111</sup> *History and Happenings*, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/?currentPage=3>, Accessed June 26, 2021.

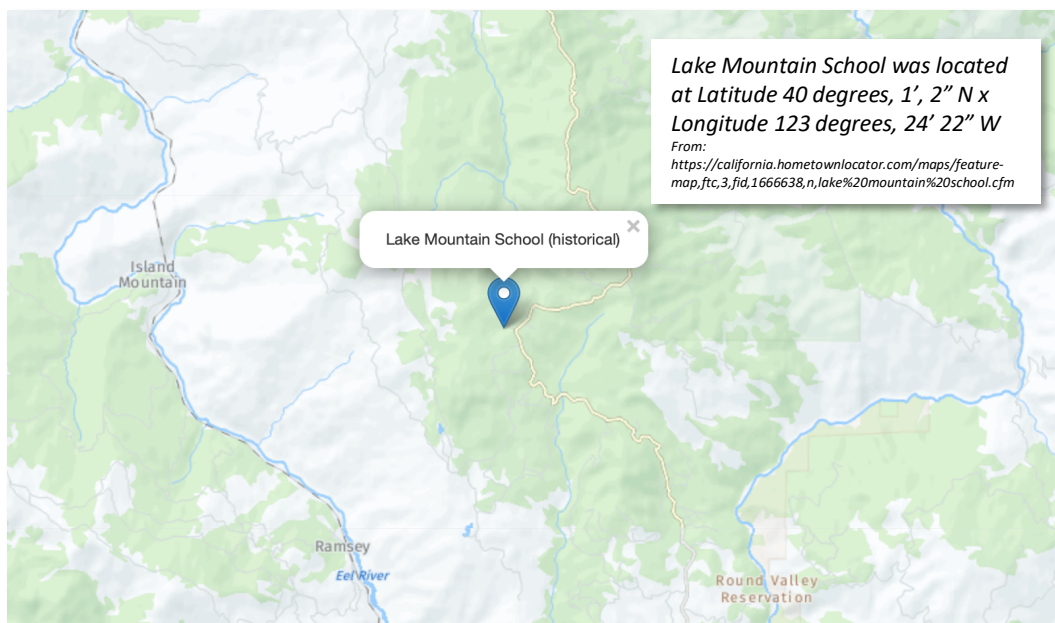
<sup>112</sup> "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County: A Project by the Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School", 2008.



on a part of the ranch; teachers used to board at the house. The ranch is a fine example of the homestead era in southern Trinity.<sup>113</sup>

On July 28, 1927 (the beginning of the 1927-18 school year), the notes from an official visit to the school indicated that Georgina Huffman was the teacher of only 7 students. She was paid \$140 per month, and while the students' progress was reported as "good" in all subject areas, the "Condition of School Building and Grounds" was "poor" and "rented".<sup>114</sup> Also in 1927, it was reported that a new school was built by Leonard Miller of Lake Mountain and was located near the Ellingwood Spring. It was noted in another publication that students didn't actually move into the new schoolhouse until 1929.<sup>115</sup> In fact, the interview below confirms that the students moved into the new building in 1929. Leona Miller noted that:

There was no school in the area so we helped to form the Lake Mountain School District and with the kindness and cooperation of Miss Lucy M. Young [County Superintendent of Schools 1919-1930], we were allowed to hold school in one of the homesteader's houses, Mr. Carl Reynolds, until our new house was completed. The school moved there the Fall of 1929 with Mrs. Georgina Huffman as teacher. She was a wonderful person as well as teacher and gave our children a good substantial foundation with principles to guide them all their lives. We owe much to her wise counseling and fair handling of every situation. Mrs. Huffman was also a certified High School teacher so Mrs. Clara Van Mater [County Superintendent of Schools from 1931 to 1956] allowed her to teach that too.<sup>116</sup>



<sup>113</sup> Jones, Alice Goen, Ed., "Trinity County Historic Sites", Trinity County Historical Society, Weaverville, 1981, 349; and Keter, Thomas S., "People and Places. A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", *Solararch.org*, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), Accessed June, 15, 2022. 104.

<sup>114</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 248.

<sup>115</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed June 15, 2022. 156.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 156-157.

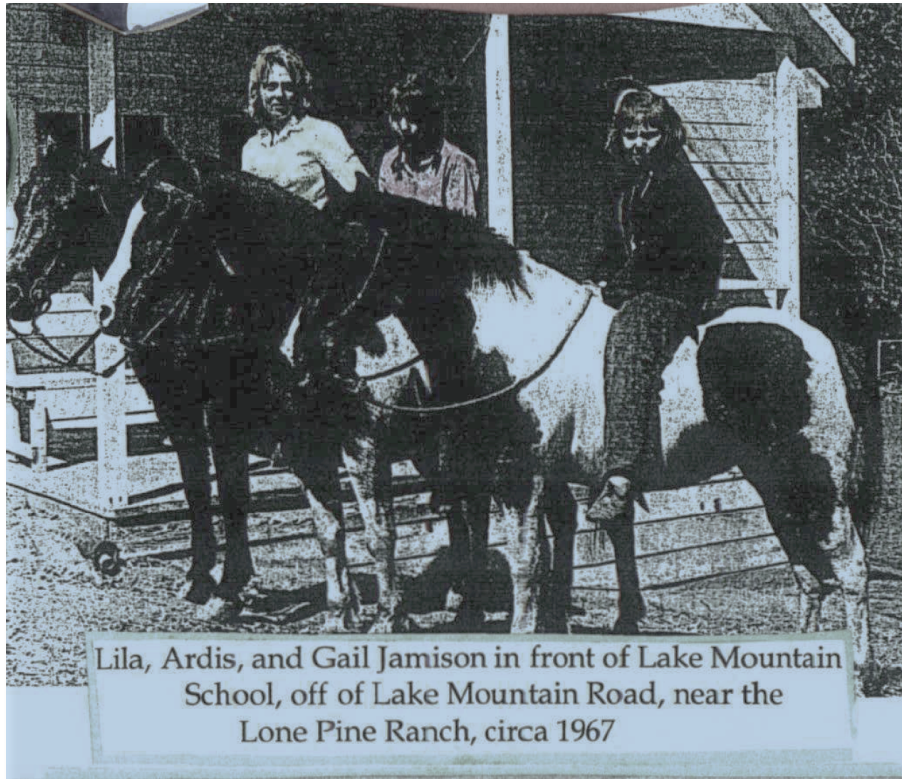


Photo and caption from "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County" by the students of Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, 2008, used with permission.

Lake Mountain School was identified in the official records from 1934 through 1936 as "Lake Mountain, Hoaglin". Given that the Official School District Directories of that time indicate that while the post office for Lake Mountain School District was indeed in Hoaglin, there also existed a Hoaglin School District. This indicates that these two districts were independent although located near each other.

Other descriptions of where Lake Mountain schoolhouse was

located are as follows:

- 1) It was mentioned in an account by Andy Scheubeck that after a few years, the only children left in the area lived at the "Horse Ranch near the Reed Orchard" so the school was moved to a house there built by Mr. Baker "Al Reed's stepfather".<sup>117</sup>
- 2) In another account, a location was mentioned by Jim Burgess when he was interviewed in 2005. He indicated that the Lake Mountain School was located further to the south near "Hotchkiss Place." He gave no dates for when this school building was open.<sup>118</sup>
- 3) Lois Hall said she began teaching at the Lake Mountain School "south of the Lone Pine Ranch on Lake Mountain Road".<sup>119</sup>
- 4) In 1948 Wm. Travis McCulloch recalled he attended Lake Mountain School located on the O. C. Little property. The teacher was Faye Banks Smith and the only other students were from the Betts family.<sup>120</sup>

Not being familiar with the specific locations above, it's hard to know if the sites mentioned were the same or a different location altogether. Given the complicated history of schools in the area, it's even possible that the schools mentioned were not the official Lake Mountain School but were located in the general Lake Mountain area – such as Long Ridge School. This seems possible as there also was a Bett's School operating in the 1940s, or else the School was

<sup>117</sup> "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School" 2008.

<sup>118</sup> I Keter, Thomas S., "People and Places. A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", Solararch.org, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf). Accessed June 15, 2022. 156-157.

<sup>119</sup> "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School" 2008.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.



only colloquially referred to as Betts School as it was primarily the Bett's children attending, but was actually the official Lake Mountain School and/or the Long Ridge School. We may never untangle this complex mystery unless someone more knowledgeable comes forward to sort out the various location descriptions.

We know that the Lake Mountain School District doesn't show up at all in the directories of school districts during the 1939-40 school year and it was noted in an annual report as being suspended. This continued to be the status during the next school year until the 1941-1942 school year when it lapsed (closed). However, the school reemerged in the 1946-47 school year as Lake Mountain School under the oversight of the Hoaglin-Zenia School District.<sup>121</sup>

On another note, during the 1947-1949 school years, the Long Ridge School District was listed as "Long Ridge, Lake Mountain". Long Ridge wasn't maintained during the 1949-50 school year, but a year later it returned again as "Long Ridge, Lake Mountain". That was the last time Lake Mountain was mentioned in any of the historical school records at the Trinity County Office of Education.

Teachers at most of the Trinity County schools rarely stayed at the same school for long. Lake Mountain was no exception. For example: The teacher for the 1935-36 it was Dorothy Ford. In the 1936-37 school year the teacher was Mr. Leland D. Stier, but the very next school year the teacher had changed to Miss Agnes O. Erickson. By 1938-39 the teacher was Miss Josephine Rogers. It may be reassuring to note that the Clerk of the Board of Trustees for the Lake Mountain School District was the same throughout this time: Mrs. Leona Miller.

See also **Bett's**, **Hoaglin**, and **Long Ridge School Districts**.

Address		RECEIPTS		
		COUNTY	STATE	SPECIAL
		20169		12373
		2967	4457	

*Lake Mountain received Federal Indian Aid funding from 1934 - 1938 due to a significant Native student population.*

<sup>121</sup> Official Directories, Warrant and disbursement Records and A Record of School Visits, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.



*The sign out front says "Lake Mountain School", no date*

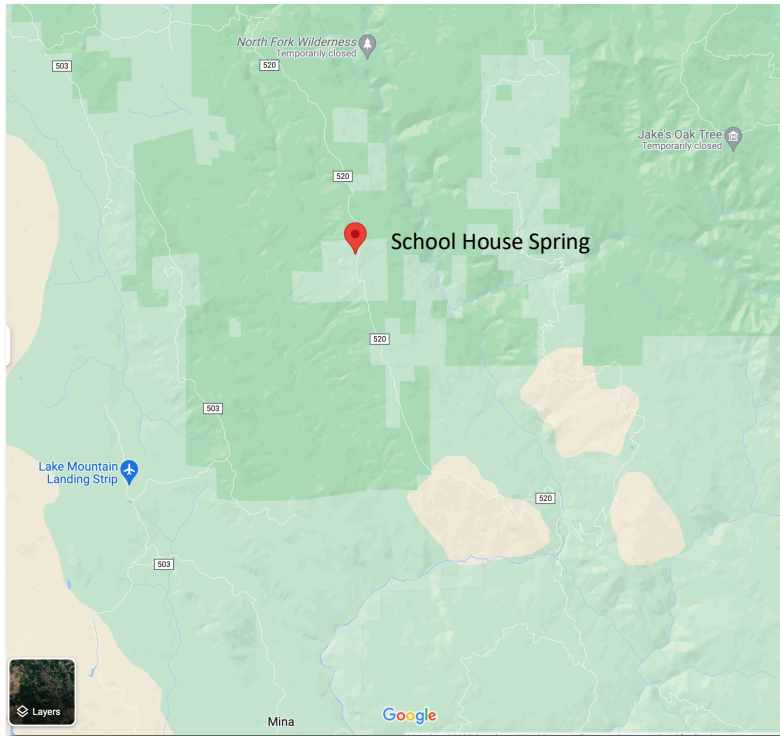


*The sign says "Community Hall" and "Lake Mtn" and the photo is identified on the back as the Lake Mountain School. It appears to be the same building as above with some changes. No date.*



## Long Ridge School District

By the late 1870s, so many families with children were living in the Long Ridge area of Trinity County that a school was required. Long Ridge refers to the ridgeline east of the Van Duzen River and runs generally northwest to southeast. It's not certain when the Long Ridge School District was first officially established, but it looks like it wasn't until 1883 that the school received apportionments from the county to fund the teacher's salary and supplies.<sup>122</sup> Prior to that time it must have been a private school.



Back in about 1879, local homesteaders built a schoolhouse on Long Ridge near a perennial spring, now often referred to as the Schoolhouse Spring, in a very isolated area about halfway down Long Ridge.<sup>123</sup> The site was at the junction of five trails on a small bench on the west side of the ridge.<sup>124</sup> It was about 110 miles from Weaverville, the county seat.<sup>125</sup> At that time, it was the only school south and west of South Fork Mountain in Trinity County. Even later when automobiles were in use, it was

said that to get to Long Ridge School a person could drive only as far as the Salt Creek Bridge, but then would have to travel the last 10 miles by walking or by horseback with pack mules if transporting goods.<sup>126</sup> The students had a phonograph, a radio, and an organ despite the difficulty in bringing these items to the site.<sup>127</sup>

Given the distances, it's notable that when another school closed due to a lack of students, a 200-pound school bell was transported from that school to Long Ridge School by Tom Duncan via pack mule. Tom Duncan, who attended the Long Ridge School District in the late 1870s as a child, wrote that the ringing of the Long Ridge School bell could be heard all the way to Haman Ridge, some distance away.<sup>128</sup> Many old-timers recall hearing the school bell early in the morning as they set off walking the three to five miles of trail to the school from their homes.

<sup>122</sup> Given, H. R., "Apportionment of School Money", *The Trinity Journal*, March 24, 1883.

<sup>123</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed December 15, 2022. 157.

<sup>124</sup> Jones, Alice Goen, Ed., "Trinity County Historic Sites", Trinity County Historical Society, Weaverville, 1981, 358.

<sup>125</sup> "Trinity School Is Reached By Officials After Arduous Trips", *The Sacramento Bee*, February 3, 1945.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> "Trinity School Is Reached By Officials After Arduous Trips" *The Sacramento Bee*, February 3, 1945.

<sup>128</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed December 15, 2022, 158; and "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County" by the Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, 2008.



The Long Ridge School and its teacher, (inset) Mrs. Hettie Taylor. The school is in an isolated part of Trinity County. It is reached from Weaverville by a 110 mile trip with the last 10 miles by pack train or walking.

## Trinity School Is Reached By Officials After Arduous Trips

WEAVERVILLE (Trinity Co.), Feb. 3.—A fourth generation of the descendants of a Texas cattleman who migrated to southwestern Trinity County has been educated through eighth grade in a 10x16 foot shake school house on Long Ridge. Among the graduates are three men serving their country in World War II and two women working in defense plants in Los Angeles.

This Long Ridge school presents one of the most difficult transportation problems to Clara Van Matre, county superintendent of schools, the rural supervisor, Anna Marie Hart, and the county librarian, Mildred Burch. To make their visits at least four times a school year it is necessary to drive about 100 miles to Salt Creek bridge and then go on horse back and with pack mules to reach this high ridge west of the Eel River by riding or walking 10 miles. There is no other way in.

**Teacher Was Pupil**  
The teacher, Mrs. Hettie Taylor, was a pupil here once.

The average attendance has been 11. Difficulties in transportation so far as other rural schools of the county are concerned do not prevent the children having motion pictures and other modern educational features. But it being impossible to get the equipment up Long Ridge the pupils in the school have no access to this feature of education. However, they have a phonograph and radio and an organ for other music. And they have the whole wooded, stream veined, outdoors for a playground.

**Is Cattle Country**  
The chief occupation of the inhabitants of the district is cattle raising. Additional income during hunting season is from acting as guides.

Trinity County has 18 rural schools, and a total of 21 rural teachers in grammar school. All but one are one teacher schools. The supervisors can drive within a reasonable distance in good weather to most of the schools. All these schools are served by one high school in Weaverville.

In its earliest incarnation, Long Ridge School was a 10 x 16-foot shake schoolhouse. Billy Malone was said to be the first teacher at Long Ridge around 1879.<sup>129</sup>

On November 1, 1881, the school building "in Long Ridge Township" was destroyed by fire along with all of its contents.<sup>130</sup> Nothing more was reported about the fire. Given the number of wood-built, and wood-fire-heated schools burning down in the early days of education in Trinity County, perhaps a fire was barely noteworthy at the time.

IN 1889 Mrs. Inez B. Dodge was the teacher and it's noted in the local paper that the "P O address" was Covelo, Mendocino County.<sup>131</sup> Even though Covelo was out of Trinity County, it was likely the location of the closest post office to the school.

Miss Isabelle J. Fox taught at Long Ridge in 1895 for \$75 per month, not to be confused with Lizzie (Isabelle) H. Fox the County Superintendent of Schools at that time. The school year began in late July or early August with eight students enrolled with an average attendance of six.<sup>132</sup>

However, by the time the Superintendent of Schools visited the school on September 27, there were 16 students enrolled and 16 present. The students had good "Order and Attention" and they were doing well in all subject areas. A note did say that

the school building was only temporary.<sup>133</sup> The same teacher closed the school for the summer

<sup>129</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed December 15, 2022, 157.

<sup>130</sup> "Burned", *The Trinity Journal*, November 19, 1881.

<sup>131</sup> "Districts, Clerks, and Teachers", *The Trinity Journal*, November 16, 1889.

<sup>132</sup> Fox, Lizzie, "Our Public Schools", *The Trinity Journal*, August 8, 1895.

<sup>133</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 15.



on June 19<sup>th</sup>. In 1896 the same Miss Fox opened the school year for the fall term on July 27<sup>th</sup> and closed the term for the winter vacation on October 30<sup>th</sup>.<sup>134</sup>

On November 21, 1896, the Trinity Journal reprinted an article that mentioned the school from the San Francisco Examiner (see previous page). In it, they described the trip from Weaverville to the Long Ridge School District made by the Trinity County Superintendent of Schools whom they described as a “school ma’am”. The trip, they said, took three days of hard riding in summer and five days in winter. The article described the schoolhouse as well-furnished and well-equipped with 300 books “by standard authors”. The books showed the “marks of wear but also of care”. One of the teachers who served at Long Ridge was said to have been very complimentary of the school, explaining that the building is better in construction than many school buildings in more populated areas, and that, on average, the scholarship of the students is higher than in other schools where students are provided with more opportunities.<sup>135</sup>

As was often the case in many early schools in Trinity County, teachers changed regularly, usually one person taught a fall term and another taught the spring term. In the case of Long Ridge, there was even more turnover. During the 1918-19 school year, the school had three different teachers at different times during the seven months the school was in session: Dora Mortenson, Lubertha E. Haydon, and Helen S. Wilson. The same thing happened again in the 1920-21 school year. The year only lasted for 6 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  months, but three teachers came and went that year: Mary Blair Grant, Lubertha E. Haydon, and Lucile B. Miller. Thankfully, Lucile B. Miller was able to continue to teach the next year for 8.5 months without having to change teachers.<sup>136</sup>

Teachers from out of the area typically boarded with nearby families due to the remoteness of the school.<sup>137</sup> Most of the students at Long Ridge were members of the Willburn and Duncan extended families. The chief occupation of the inhabitants of this district was cattle raising with some acting as guides during hunting season.<sup>138</sup> One man listed his occupation in the 1880 Long Ridge area census as “Bear hunter”.<sup>139</sup>

### Long Ridge School House Location and a Tax for a New Schoolhouse

In 1889 a very short article in the local paper indicated that the “two schools of the Long Ridge township” were not “located advantageously” and that either a new school district should be established or “the boundaries of the old ones should be so changed as to accommodate more children.”<sup>140</sup> In fact, ten years later, in July of 1891, the Board of Supervisors (who acted as the

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<sup>134</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, August 1, 1896, and October 24, 1896.

<sup>135</sup> “Round Valley’s Feud As It Looks To An Examiner Reporter”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 21, 1896, originally from *The Examiner*, November 15, 1896.

<sup>136</sup> *School Directory*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education. 1918-19, 1920-21, and 1921-22.

<sup>137</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 147.

<sup>138</sup> Duncan, Thomas G, “Thomas G. Duncan in his own words”, Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook, 1956, 25.

<sup>139</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed December 15, 2022, 107.

<sup>140</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, April 13, 1889.

Board of Education for Trinity County at that time) met and determined that the boundaries of the Long Ridge School District “are conflicting and incorrectly described”. Therefore, the Board ordered the County Superintendent of Schools to “change, harmonize and describe said boundaries and report such action to the board...”.<sup>141</sup> On August 1, 1891, the board met again and this time approved new boundaries for the school:

Beginning at a point on the county line between Humboldt and Trinity counties [sic] where the section line between sections 19 and 30 of Township 3 S, Range 6E, H. Mer., there crosses said county line and running thence East between sections 19 and 30, 20 and 29, 21 and 28, 22 and 27, 23 and 26, 24 and 25, of said Township 3 S., Range 6 E, H. Mer., thence between sections 19 and 30, 20 and 29, 21 and 28, 22 and 27, 23 and 26, 24 and 25, of Township 3 S., Range 7 E., thence between sections 19 and 30, 20 and 29, 21 and 28, of township 3 S, R. 8 E, H. Mer; thence to the west boundary of township 27 N., R. 12 W., Mount Diablo Mer.; thence south along the west boundary of Tp 27 N., R. 12 W., M. D. M. to the corner common to township 26 and 27 N., R. 12 West; thence along the township line between townships 26 and 27 N., Ranges 12, 11 and 10 W., M. D. Mer. to the line dividing Trinity and Tehama counties; thence following the county line to the southeast corner of Trinity county; thence along the county line between Trinity and Mendocino counties to the southwest corner of Trinity county; thence along the county line between Trinity and Humboldt counties to place of beginning.<sup>142</sup>

In 1892, a notice in the local paper announced, “...a meeting of the qualified electors of the Long Ridge School District... will be held in the Hettenpome School House on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of March 1892 for the purpose of voting a tax to build a school house in said district”.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, in August of 1895, an election was held and a majority of the electors voted for a tax to raise funds to build a public schoolhouse in the Long Ridge School District. The total sum that needed to be raised was \$450. Consequently, a tax was levied on property assessed in that district in the amount of 30¢ for every \$100 of property valuation. Some 60 properties were listed under the announcement in the local paper. Interestingly, one of the properties listed belonged to a German Savings and Loan Society.<sup>144</sup>

In September of 1895, Long Ridge was referred to as “Long Ridge, Hettenpome Valley” in the record of school visits.<sup>145</sup> But also in 1895, the school was clearly considered its own school district in the local paper when referring to the successful tax increase to build a new public schoolhouse for the “Long Ridge School District”.<sup>146</sup>

## Yet More Fires

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., July 18, 1891.

<sup>142</sup> “The Coyote Law”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 1, 1891.

<sup>143</sup> Atkison, WM., “Notice”, *The Trinity Journal*, February 18, 1892.

<sup>144</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, September 21, 1895.

<sup>145</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 15

<sup>146</sup> “Board of Supervisors Tax Session”, *The Trinity Journal*, September 21, 1895.

The Long Ridge schoolhouse burned down in November of 1896. The new schoolhouse, “situated in the Hettenpom Valley” had been built just the year before and was well equipped. However, after the fire, “not even a book or slate pencil was left.” At least the school was insured for \$500.<sup>147</sup> Thanks to the contractor, E. F. Burgess, who completed work on the schoolhouse during the “stormy months of winter” the school was replaced by a much better building and was expected to reopen sometime during the month of April 1897.<sup>148</sup>

However, unbelievably, “the new school house in the Long Ridge School District” burned down yet again on May 15, 1897.<sup>149</sup> County Superintendent Lizzy Fox arrived to close the school the very next week. It was felt the fire was incendiary in nature.<sup>150</sup> A social dance had been held in the building the night before, possibly celebrating the brand-new schoolhouse. Before the dance, a slight fire had been lit in the stove to take the chill off the air and was then allowed to go out on its own. There was no fire lit in the stove the next day when the school burned so it was not believed to have been an accident. The people in the neighborhood were reportedly enraged about the fire and wanted it investigated. There were rumors of who the guilty party might have been, but the outcome of an investigation, if there had been one, is not known.<sup>151</sup>

A lot of instructional time was lost that school year as historic school records indicate that the school was only in session for a total of “4 ¾ months of school”.<sup>152</sup> We know, at least, that by October of 1897, the school was up and running and being taught by Agnes S. Gates, so a new building had been built, yet again, by that time.<sup>153</sup>

### Confusing Long Ridge History

Small historic schools in Trinity County came and went due to changing numbers of children in a particular area, or were moved to a different location to be closer to more students. Sometimes a school or school building might be merged into another school or school district, taking on a different name. Then again, sometimes a school named after its first location retained that name but moved to a different location. Schools in the Southern Trinity area are particularly hard to track. For instance, one reference referred to “two schools of Long Ridge” which is a basis for some confusion as it’s not clear what the second school might have been named.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, May 29, 1897.

<sup>148</sup> “Hetten Jottings”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 17, 1897.

<sup>149</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 54.

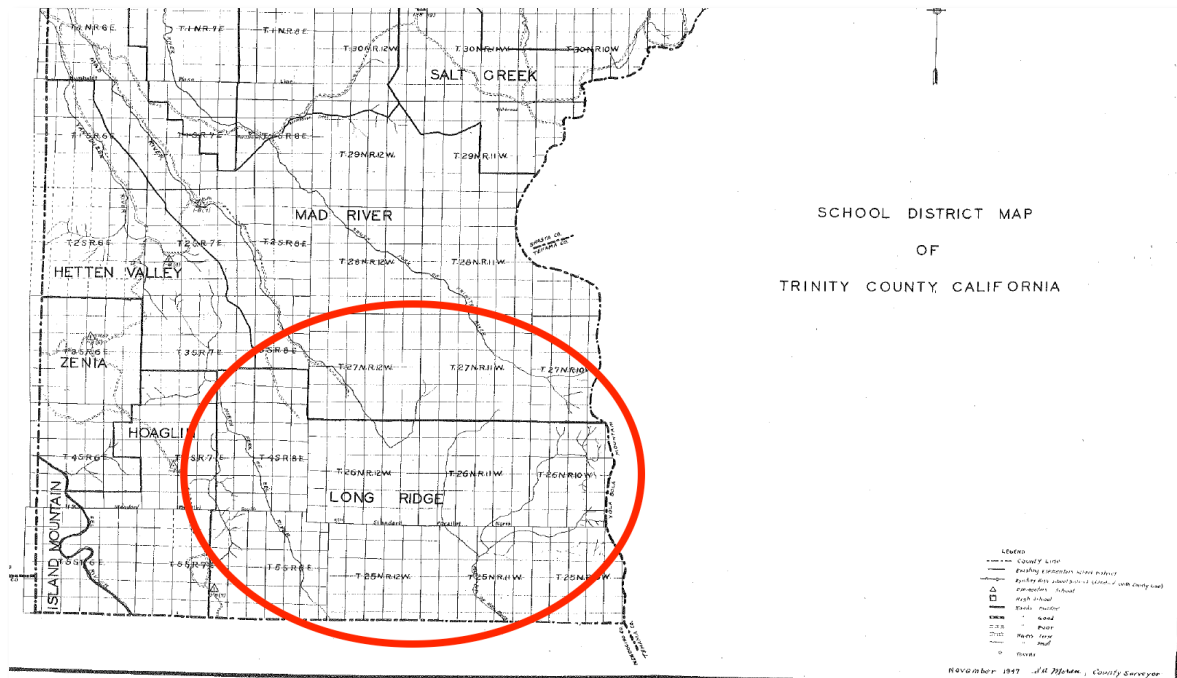
<sup>150</sup> “Hay Fork Items”, *The Trinity Journal*, May 19, 1897.

<sup>151</sup> “School House Burned”, *The Trinity Journal*, May 29, 1897.

<sup>152</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education. 54; *The Trinity Journal*, May 29, 1897.

<sup>153</sup> Fox, Lizzie, “Districts, Clerks and Teachers”, *The Trinity Journal*, October 2, 1897.

<sup>154</sup> “Southwestern Trinity”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 13, 1889.



The map above is from a 1947 map of school districts located at the Trinity County Office of Education.

To dig further into what schools actually constituted the Long Ridge School District we have to look at several different school records and try to line them up with different people’s recollections.

The Long Ridge (public) School was in session by at least 1883 and continued essentially uninterrupted through the 1901-02 school year, except, of course, during the fires it endured. However, a notation in school records indicates that Long Ridge School was then annexed to Hettenshaw School under Hettenshaw’s name prior to the 1903-04 school year.<sup>155</sup> Indeed, there is no mention of Long Ridge School in the records for the 1902-03 school year and for some years beyond. A note in the school disbursement records in 1912 indicates that the address for the Hettenshaw School was the town of Caution. In 1917, Long Ridge School appeared in the disbursement records again and was first referred to as “Long Ridge, address Caution”. So, the question we are left with is: were there two schools in Caution, one of which was called Long Ridge? Or could it be possible that during the time the Long Ridge School was “closed” it might well have become temporarily known as Hettenshaw and then later reclaimed its original name? This is certainly a possible explanation, although it’s also conceivable that during the interim when Long Ridge School was not receiving funding, it had instead become a private school. This usually occurred when there were under six students enrolled or if a teacher could not be hired. Support for this supposition may be found in an interview with Irene Willburn Stapp [no date] during which she asserted that she knew Long Ridge School to be open during the period from “about 1905 to 1915”.<sup>156</sup> Since this is close to the time Long

<sup>155</sup> “School District Disbursement & Receipts”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>156</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 150 – 151.



Ridge no longer appeared in public school records, it could very well have reverted to a private school by the same name.

There is a story about a large school bell, weighing over 200 pounds, was purchased originally for the Hettenshaw School District, which closed after the 1912-13 school year. Next, the bell was said to have been used by the Caution School which opened the very next school year (could it have been the Hettenshaw School that was renamed Caution?) until that school was closed and then it was taken to Long Ridge School by pack mule.<sup>157</sup> It's entirely likely that the students from Hettenshaw were also transferred to the "new" Caution School, just like the bell, until that school too was suspended first during the 1920-21 school year and then closed for good for the 1922-23 school year.<sup>158</sup> Perhaps the students - along with the bell - were then transferred to the Long Ridge School.

The supposition that students were moved from Caution School to the Long Ridge School is supported by a source that said "After the Caution/North Fork School was closed, that school was moved to Long Ridge".<sup>159</sup> The only "North Fork School" known in county school records was located in Helena, too far away to be considered in this discussion. However, the North Fork of the Eel River is located in Southern Trinity, so this could be a reference to one early location of the Caution Schoolhouse. The same source said that "it appears" that the Long Ridge School came to be referred to as the "Caution School", with the explanation that this could have occurred because by 1915 the Caution Post Office had been moved to a Location on Long Ridge.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, a page from the Long Ridge School's Annual Report in 1933-34 refers to the school as "Long Ridge - Caution".<sup>161</sup> In addition, a page from the historic Register of School Trustees shows that "Caution School" was still related in some way to the Long Ridge School since the trustees were individuals who lived in the immediate Long Ridge area (the Duncan family, the Church Willburn family, and Frank Travis).<sup>162</sup>

To add more complication to the puzzle, another reference quoted John Holtorf [no date] who said, "The Long Ridge School was voted from Long Ridge to Hoaglin in about 1890 and was named Hettenpom."<sup>163</sup> It's just not clear what to make of this information. Perhaps we will never unequivocally solve the puzzle regarding the different schools in the Long Ridge area, at least until more solid information is found.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>158</sup> "Statistics of Elementary Schools", *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 12.

<sup>159</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 149.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>161</sup> "Statistics of Elementary Schools", *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 2.

<sup>162</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 151, 147; and the Register of School Trustees, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>163</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017, accessed November 4, 2022, 157.

All of that confusing information aside, we do know that in 1917, Long Ridge School was alive and well.<sup>164</sup> In October that year, Hettie Lowden is recorded as having taught at Long Ridge for \$80 per month with 14 students.<sup>165</sup> Mrs. Hettie S. Taylor was also said to have taught at Long Ridge as well [no dates] and was once a pupil there herself.<sup>166</sup> Could Mrs. Hettie Taylor be the married name of Hettie Lowden? This has not yet been determined. In 1918, Dora Mortenson was teaching eight students, at least in October that year, for a salary of \$80 and the students' "Order and Attention" was very good.<sup>167</sup> In April of 1920, the salary had increased to \$100 per month for teacher Helen E. Anderson, and all 12 students enrolled then were doing well in their studies.<sup>168</sup> In August 1921, the number of students fell to seven but the salary increased to \$120 for teacher Lucile B. Miller.<sup>169</sup> In 1926, teacher Judith E Willburn worked for \$140 per month. Still, only seven students were enrolled in Long Ridge School.<sup>170</sup>

Curiously, the school was suspended and then immediately re-established on the same day, July 2, 1929.<sup>171</sup> Addie Burgess, the sister to Jim Burgess, taught there that school year and the next, from 1929-1931, and was paid \$130 per month with eight students enrolled. During the official visit to the school on July 31, 1929, it was noted that the building and the toilets needed repairs.<sup>172</sup> During the school week Addie Burgess stayed at Church Willburn's house in what was called Caution, about two miles from the school. At the weekends it took her two and a half hours to travel from there to the Hoaglin Valley where she lived.

Hazel Willburn, a former Trinity County Supervisor, had one of her first teaching assignments at Long Ridge<sup>173</sup> as did Florence Willburn during the 1931-32 school year. Florence is believed to be Hazel's younger sister.<sup>174</sup> When Florence was teaching, the number of students enrolled increased to six, and then the enrollment increased to eight in 1933-34. In the 1939-40 school

	COUNTY	STATE	LINE
Long Ridge			
Address Caution			
ence	283 22		14256
School Fund Appmt		7359	
Annual Fund Appmt	2944	4415	
School Fund Appmt		7359	
Annual Fund Appmt	2944	4415	

Long Ridge received Federal Indian Aid funding during the years 1932 – 1938 indicating that a significant number of students enrolled were Native American.

<sup>164</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 581.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> "Trinity School Is Reached By Officials After Arduous Trips", *The Sacramento Bee*, February 3, 1945.

<sup>167</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 6.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>170</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 225.

<sup>171</sup> *Disbursement Records*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>172</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 299; and *The Students of Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County*, 2008.

<sup>173</sup> Jones, Alice Goen, Ed., *"Trinity County Historic Sites"*, Trinity County Historical Society, Weaverville, 1981, 358.

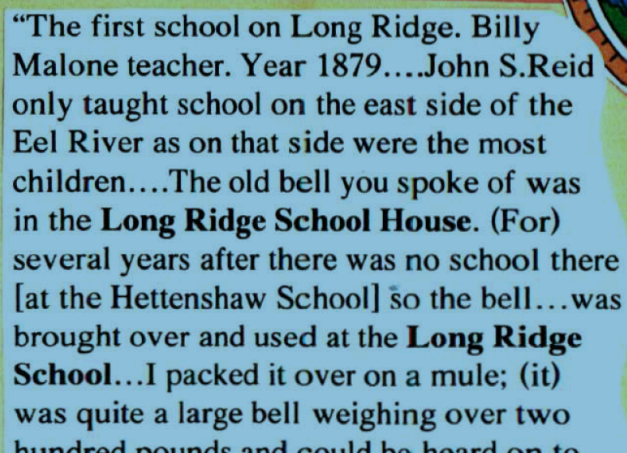
<sup>174</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 350 and Sarah Supahan, email communication with Willburn, Tammi via Canale, Peggy =, June 19, 2023.

year, the school was referred to as “Long Ridge, Lake Mountain”. Likely the two schools merged since Lake Mountain had only two students and was officially suspended on July 8, 1940.<sup>175</sup>

By 1941-42, the Long Ridge School was referred to as “Long Ridge, Zenia”. By the school year of 1944-45, there were only four students enrolled, and, unsurprisingly, in 1945-46, the school was suspended. However, the little-school-that-could wasn’t done yet! Long Ridge was in session in the 1947-48 school year and again was referred to as “Long Ridge, Lake Mountain.” In fact, the Long Ridge School District name and boundaries still appear in a “School District Map of Trinity County, California,” created in 1947 (see below). On the back of the map is a list of the November 23, 1948, polling places in Trinity County. One polling place was named “Long Ridge School Building at Lake Mountain, California.”<sup>176</sup>

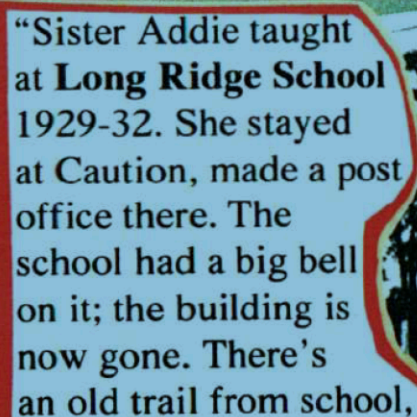
In 1949-50, the historic school records at the Trinity County Office of Education indicate, “No school maintained” at Long Ridge.<sup>177</sup> The Long Ridge School District was said to have lapsed into the Hoaglin District in 1955.<sup>178</sup>

See also [Caution, Hettenshaw, and Hoaglin/Hettenpome School Districts.](#)



“The first school on Long Ridge. Billy Malone teacher. Year 1879....John S.Reid only taught school on the east side of the Eel River as on that side were the most children....The old bell you spoke of was in the **Long Ridge School House**. (For several years after there was no school there [at the Hettenshaw School] so the bell... was brought over and used at the **Long Ridge School**...I packed it over on a mule; (it) was quite a large bell weighing over two hundred pounds and could be heard on to

Office of  
Education  
Collection  
at Eel River  
places



“Sister Addie taught at **Long Ridge School** 1929-32. She stayed at Caution, made a post office there. The school had a big bell on it; the building is now gone. There’s an old trail from school,

This Souvenir  
of the  
school year now closing  
is presented to you  
with the best wishes of

Long Ridge School  
DISTRICT NO. 5  
Trinity County, California  
June 18th, 1931

Pupils  
Warren Willburn





## Peak School District

The first Peak School was established in February 1908 out of a part of the Zenia and Hettenpome School Districts.<sup>179</sup>

The new Peak School District was to be “Bounded and particularly described” as follows:

Beginning at the N. E. corner of Sec. 86, Township 3 South, Range 6 East, H. M. run west on section line to N. E. Corner of Section 33 N, on section line to N. E. Cor. of Sec. 28, W on Sec. line N. W. Cor. of Sec. 29; S. on section line to S. W. Cor. of Sec. 29; W to Humboldt Co. line, S on county line to S. W. Cor. of Se1/4 of the Se1/4 of Sec. 80, T 4 S, R 6 E; E on Sec. lines to Twp. line, Twp. 4 S, R 6 E, ‘thence N on twp line to place of beginning.<sup>180</sup>



The place was described as “located on Gray Point, which is a cold, open-ridge”.<sup>181</sup>

A petition against the formation of the district was filed in April of 1908 with the Board of Supervisors (acting as the County Board of Education at that time in history) but was denied.<sup>182</sup> The concern was that the new district was taking a part of the Zenia and Hettenpome school district territory and that it would take students away from the Hoaglin School District.<sup>183</sup>

An election was held on August 2, 1909, to vote on a tax to build and furnish a schoolhouse. The proposal passed. Fifty cents were levied upon every hundred dollars of assessed property within the new Peak School District to raise the total amount of \$250.<sup>184</sup> This was likely “the permanent log schoolhouse on the western slope of Kettenpom Peak about one mile west of Seven Cedars”.<sup>185</sup> Prior to the new schoolhouse being built, the school was held at the Davis home. Interestingly, the mailing address for the Peak School District was first Alderpoint and then in 1912 it was changed to Zenia, before returning to Alderpoint.<sup>186</sup> This fact may very well

<sup>179</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, February 15, 1908.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy who had interviewed Calvin Stewart, October 25, 2023.

<sup>182</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 11, 1908.

<sup>183</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, February 15, 1908, May 23, 1908, and July 11, 1908.

<sup>184</sup> “Election Notice”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 17, 1909, and August 23, 1909.

<sup>185</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed August 23, 2023, 161.

<sup>186</sup> Disbursement Records, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

have been about the nearest functioning Post Office rather than the actual address of the school.

Miss Leo Herzinger, was the first teacher at the new school for the beginning of the 1908-09 school year. She closed the fall term on October 3, 1908.<sup>187</sup> Miss Emma M. Butts was the teacher at the Peak School District in the fall of 1910 but was “called to her home by the illness of her mother” in September, and another teacher had to take her place.<sup>188</sup> That teacher was, apparently, Miss Paula Thomas who closed the school on November 11, 1910 for the winter vacation.<sup>189</sup>

In 1912, the Peak School opened for the “fall” term on July 8th with Miss Lillian White, from the Pitt White Ranch, as teacher. Miss White closed the Peak school for the fall term in mid-November 1912. Miss White would “leave later to pass the winter in Eureka where her brother Floyd is attending High school”. She was said to have taught for a number of years at the Peak School.<sup>190</sup> Indeed, she is mentioned in the local paper as still teaching there in 1916.<sup>191</sup>

On July 7, 1916, there was a notice in the paper regarding an election for a District School Tax to build a new schoolhouse for the Peak School District. It was necessary to raise \$390 for this purpose. Voting on the tax was to take place on July 29, 1916.<sup>192</sup>

In August of 1917, the Peak Schoolhouse, as well as the Zenia Schoolhouse, were torn down. It was stated in the local paper that, “new buildings will be erected in better locations”. Miss Lillian T. White was to teach at Peak that fall, but it’s unclear how quickly a new building was erected.<sup>193</sup> That second Peak School was built at a site close to the county road. The maps below indicate the location of that second school site.<sup>194</sup>

The school was visited by several people from the Trinity County Office of Education on October 16, 1918. The name of the teacher at that time was Marion J. Turner who was trained at the Humboldt State Normal School. She was paid \$80 per month. There were 20 students enrolled and 17 present at the time of the visit. Their “Order and Attention” was listed as “Very Good” and so were the “Methods and Zeal of the Teacher. The “Condition of the School Building and Grounds” was listed as “Good”. The students were also recorded as “Good” in all of their studies except for the subject of writing which was listed as “Average”.<sup>195</sup> The next year a visit occurred on September 29, 1919, when Hettie S. Lowden was teaching 19 enrolled students with 13 present on the day of the visit. Miss Lowden had also taught at Long Ridge two years prior. Having an experienced teacher, all seemed well except for a mysterious note in the report: “District needs cooperation of people”.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, October 3, 1908.

<sup>188</sup> “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, October 1, 1910.

<sup>189</sup> “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, December 10, 1910.

<sup>190</sup> “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, Nov 16, 1912; and Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed August 23, 2023, 161.

<sup>191</sup> “In the Local Field”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 1, 1916.

<sup>192</sup> “Election Notice for District School Tax”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 7, 1916.

<sup>193</sup> “Schools are opening”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 27, 1917.

<sup>194</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy who had interviewed Calvin Stewart, October 25, 2023.

<sup>195</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 20.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

In July 1923, Bessie Firlotte was teaching 11 students at Peak School. Her salary was \$140 per month. At this time the students were doing well in all subject areas except for reading. The report gave them an “F” in this area. It was also noted that a teacherage was needed for teacher housing.<sup>197</sup> In August of 1924, the enrollment had risen to 17 students, but the “Methods and Zeal of Teacher”, in this case, Mary Louise Burgess, was reported as being only “Fair”. Mary Burgess was still teaching 17 students as of July 1925. The school, however, needed a flag and curtains.<sup>198</sup>

In July of 1927, the school changed teachers and was back with Lillian White, teaching only nine students. She was paid the same salary as was offered in 1923.<sup>199</sup> Lillian White continued teaching from 1923 until at least September 1932. The salary had actually decreased to \$135 per month. She had only nine students that school year.

Peak School operated for 30 years. By the 1938-39 school year the school was suspended and remained suspended until it permanently lapsed (closed) prior to the 1940-41 school year.<sup>200</sup> One informant believed the school was open until 1948. If so, it was opened again as a private school, funded by the parents of the children who attended, as the school does not show up in any educational records beyond 1941.

**See also Hettenpome, Hoaglin, Seven Cedars, and Zenia School Districts.**

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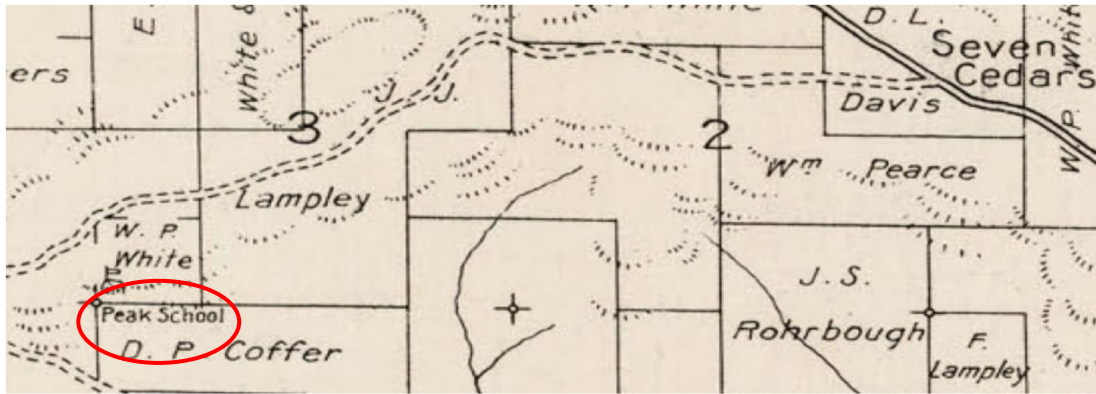
<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>198</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 175 and 202.

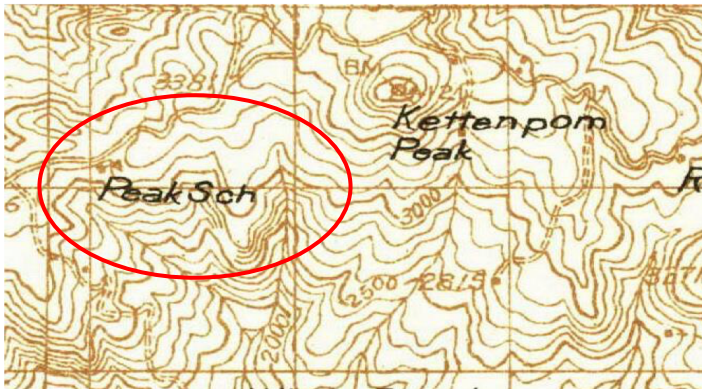
<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>200</sup> “Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 30; and *Warrant Records*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.





The Belcher map shows the location of the Peak School (lower left).  
A2: 26b



Peak School on the 1931 USGS map.  
(A2: 23)

The maps on this page are obtained from [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), page 161. The photo is found in "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County" by the students of Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary School, 2008, used with permission.

## Ruth School, Mad River School District (AKA “Painesville School”)

The town and the school district were named for the river that helped to inspire explorer Josiah Greggs’ temper<sup>201</sup>. The Mad River School District had no schoolhouse when it began. Instead, when Joseph “Jodie” Hutchens started school there as a student, they were taught under some large willow and ash trees.<sup>202</sup>

The Mad River School District was said to have been “organized” in 1897, perhaps first as a single, private school.<sup>203</sup> The school district was officially established in county school records on January 10, 1898.<sup>204</sup> In fact, that year is confirmed in an article in the Trinity Journal that lists the polling place for Hettenshaw area at the “Mad River school house” on October 29, 1898.<sup>205</sup>

In a report following an official visit to the school on June 5, 1899, there were 15 students enrolled with only eight in attendance on the day of the visit. Their “order” was “Exceedingly good”, very obedient and attentive.” Perhaps this was because the teacher, Miss Elizabeth “Lizzie” Taylor, displayed “an unusual amount of zeal and energy”.<sup>206</sup> A note in the local paper declares that Miss Taylor of Weaverville would be opening the school for the Spring term on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1899.<sup>207</sup>

A schoolhouse was finally constructed for the school sometime between 1900 and 1904. It was built across the Mad River from the present (2023) Mad River Store and Post Office, in Lassik ancestral territory. Every year it was inundated by the rising waters of the river. Consequently, the school was rebuilt about fifteen miles upstream and was said to have been renamed Ruth Elementary School.<sup>208</sup> The school was indeed located in the community of Ruth. The town of Ruth was named in 1902 after Ruth McKnight, the granddaughter of John T. McKnight and his wife who lived in the area.<sup>209</sup> The school located there was administered by the Mad River Joint School District.<sup>210</sup> However, the actual name of the school can be disputed. While some documents - as well as many individuals - refer to the school as “Ruth School”, in the historical school records at the Trinity County Office of Education the name of the school was officially written, “Mad River School, Ruth”, as though it was the Mad River School located in the community of Ruth. Also, there is no mention of a “Ruth School” in the local paper from 1900 to 1919 although there are many references to Mad River School District during the same period. Perhaps the school was simply more casually referred to by the community as “Ruth School” to distinguish it from the first, original Mad River School building. We may never really know for sure.

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<sup>201</sup> “How the River Got Its Name”, *Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook*, 1966, 22.

<sup>202</sup> Hutchens, Joseph N. “Jodie”, “Memories of Early Days on Mad River”, *Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook*, 1967, 29.

<sup>203</sup> “Trinity County Schools Growing With California”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956.

<sup>204</sup> Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 28; and historical records from the Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>205</sup> “Election Proclamation”, *The Trinity Journal*, October 29, 1898.

<sup>206</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 100.

<sup>207</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, March 18, 1899.

<sup>208</sup> Smith, Donald W., “The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School”, California State University, Chico, 1975, 10.

<sup>209</sup> “History and Happenings, Acorns of Information about Local History and Genealogy”, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/?currentPage=4>, accessed March 24, 2023.

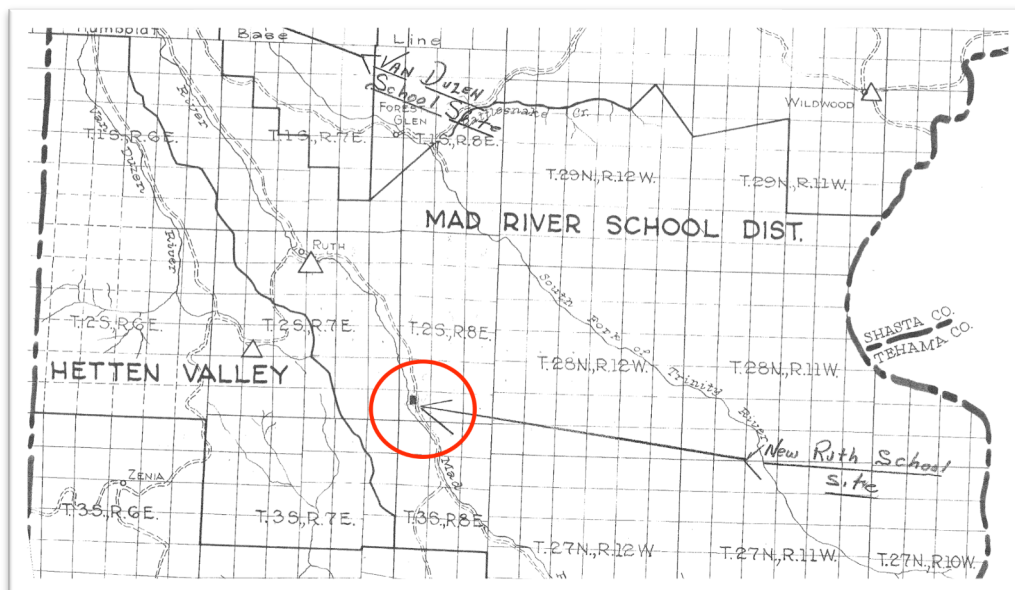
<sup>210</sup> Smith, Donald W., “The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School”, California State University, Chico, 1975, 10.

In the fall of 1903, C. W. Leinger was the teacher and the school was closed on November 13 for the winter break.<sup>211</sup> For the 1904-05 school year, the teacher at “Mad River” was John J. Reid who taught for \$80 per month.<sup>212</sup> In April of 1906, an article in the local paper explained that Mr. Hill, who had taught in Hoaglin several years prior, was traveling to his new teaching assignment at “Mad River”. Unfortunately, he lost his way and had to spend the night in the woods. Finally, a day later, he arrived at “Ruth” just in time to open the school for the spring term. Not only is this information an illustration of just how isolated the area was – and still is – but it’s also an example of the way that the two locations are often used interchangeably.<sup>213</sup>

In any event, it appears that the schoolhouse was rebuilt in 1910 by the ranchers who lived nearby, and was described as a “very nice schoolhouse”. That school building was still there when Joseph “Jodie” Hutchens wrote an article about it which was published in the 1967 Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook.<sup>214</sup>

In August 1914, according to the official visiting records, the teacher at Mad River was Amy C. Sunde. Her entire teaching experience consisted of 20 months, four of which were at Mad River. Her teaching certificate came from Trinity County. There were 15 students enrolled at the school and 13 were present at the time of the visit. She was paid \$80 per month.<sup>215</sup> Four years later, in a visit on October 1918, Caltha Robinson was teaching at Mad River for the same salary. There were 18 students at this time. The “Methods and Zeal” of Miss Robinson was reported to be only “fair”. The very next October, of 1919, Maori Davis, who received her diploma from the Humboldt State Normal School (a teacher training program), was employed at the school and had 14 students enrolled. She was paid \$90 per month. The records indicate she was an excellent teacher and her students were doing well in all subject areas. In fact, a note about the visit reads “Very fine teacher, ardent and fond of her work.” Two years later, in 1921, the

teacher was A. W. Mock who made \$120 per month. The enrollment had dropped significantly to six students, dangerously close to the cut-off for public funding. In fact, a note in the visit records indicates that the McKnight



<sup>211</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, December 19, 1903.

<sup>212</sup> “Districts, Clerks, Teachers, Trinity County, 1904-1905”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.

<sup>213</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, April 27, 1906.

<sup>214</sup> Hutchens, Joseph N. “Jodie”, “Memories of Early Days on Mad River”, *Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook*, 1967, 29.

<sup>215</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 492.

children had been attending irregularly and were planning to move to Big Bar so there was a danger of the school having a poor attendance record. Remarkably, the school was able to continue, however. There was a visit to the school in July of 1926 by the county superintendent at the time. Anne S. Hunder (? the handwritten name is not fully legible) taught at Mad River for \$145 per month, but there were only five students. The number of students had to have been a concern as there were still only five students recorded during visits in July 1929 and September 1930. Both years were taught by teacher Anita Anderson whose salary went from \$140 to \$150 over the course of a year. Luckily, enrollment increased to seven in August of 1931 under teacher Elizabeth Davitt. However, at that time the school needed repairs on the building and the water system.<sup>216</sup> This could have spelled the end of the Mad River School District, but it continued on.

“Mad River, Ruth” was the only school listed in the area until the “Emergency School, Mad River” was noted under the Mad River School District in the Annual Report records at the Trinity County Office of Education. This “Emergency School” existed from the 1935-36 school year through the 1939-40 school year.<sup>217</sup> Bertha Martin taught school at the emergency school on Forest Service land along the Mad River in a tent in 1935-36. For one boy of 13, it was the first time he had ever attended school.<sup>218</sup>

For just one school year, in 1946-47, an additional school fell under the Mad River School District, referred to as “Lower Mad River, Bridgeville”.<sup>219</sup> It’s interesting to note that the community of Ruth is located on “Lower Mad River Road”.

Roberta (Lynch) Frasier, the mother of Peggy Canale, for many years the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District Superintendent, lived on the Van Duzen side and used to ride her horse over the Mad River Ridge to the Mad River School when she was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 1949.<sup>220</sup>

Besides a school, the Ruth community also constructed a teacherage (a place for the teacher to live) which was later used as a classroom, at least in 1956. At that same time, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Reese were the teachers at the school and there were 30 students enrolled. The Mad River School District trustees then were Bruce Simpson, Chauncey F. Willburn, and Mrs. Earl P. Dillon<sup>221</sup>.

In 1959, the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District began to buy land along the Mad River in order to construct a water reservoir for the Eureka and Fortuna communities along the coast. Ruth Dam was completed and Ruth Lake was filled by 1962. “Ruth School” was then rebuilt even further up the Mad River about two miles south of the community of Ruth due to the construction of the dam.<sup>222</sup> See the un-dated map below with the hand-written location of the “new Ruth School site”.

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<sup>216</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 18, 46, 70, 227, 352.

<sup>217</sup> “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1935-36 – 1939-40.

<sup>218</sup> Keter, Thomas S., “A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era”, [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed August 23, 2023, 153.

<sup>219</sup> “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1946-47.

<sup>220</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Superintendent of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District, April 22, 2022.

<sup>221</sup> “A Short History of the Schools of Trinity County”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956, 6.

<sup>222</sup> Smith, Donald W., “The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School”, California State University, Chico, 1975, 11.



One building that was Ruth School later became the current (2023) community church located at 19320 Mad River Road.<sup>223</sup> An additional Ruth School that was only used for a few years is now Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Headquarters.

Another school building was completed in 1964 (see the last photo below). It was 2,544 square feet and cost \$74,169.<sup>224</sup>

When the Hettenshaw Elementary School and Ruth Elementary schools were both closed around 1969, students from both schools were sent to Van Duzen Elementary School, in the “Mad River Joint School District”.<sup>225</sup> In 1969, the Mad River District had a total of 126 students and 138 students in 1970.<sup>226</sup>



*Also called "Painesville School" due to its location at Painesville, across the river from Mad River Store. Photo provided by Peggy Canale from her family's collection*

According to the California Department of Education, there are actual records that “Ruth Elementary School” of the Mad River Joint Elementary District did exist by that name, however, their records indicate it was open on July 1, 1980 (the same date as Van Duzen School), and closed for good on June 30, 1989. The County-District-School Code (CDS Code) was listed as 53 71753 6053797.<sup>227</sup> There’s no further explanation for this information.

See also **Hettenshaw and Van Duzen Schools**.

<sup>223</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Superintendent of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District, April 22, 2022.

<sup>224</sup> This was referred to in handwritten, untitled notes found in the Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>225</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Superintendent of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District, January 4, 2022.

<sup>226</sup> *Trinity County School Bulletin*, Trinity County Office of Education, October 1970, 2.

<sup>227</sup> “California School Directory”, California Department of Education, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory/details?cdscode=53717536053797>, accessed April 14, 2023.



Four undated photos all labeled "Ruth School" found in the Historical Photo Collection at the Trinity County Office of Education



The same photo above is also labeled "Old Mad River School at Old Ruth Site" and found in "Community Treasures: A pictorial account of our community" Elementary School, 2000. Peggy Cannon, teacher.







*Ruth School Constructed in 1964, closed in 1969, and now the Ruth Community Church.*



## Seven Cedars School

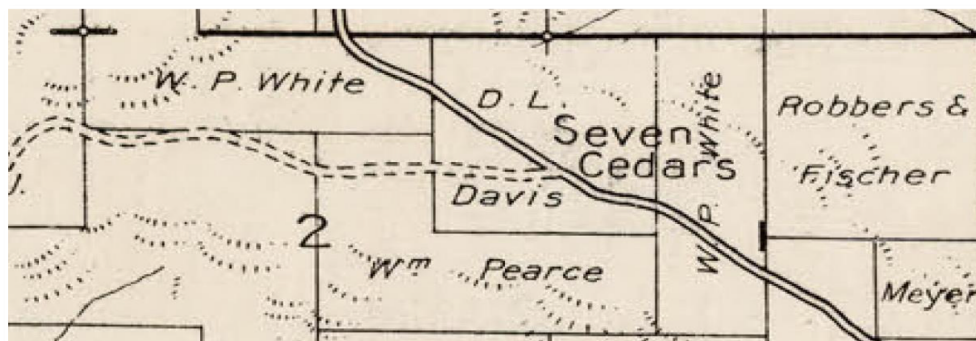
There is little information in the historical record about the Seven Cedars School which had to have been a private school paid for by the parents of the children who attended.

Seven Cedars was the name of the Dudley L. Davis property. It was home to Davis, his wife Minnie Rice Davis, their five sons, one daughter-in-law, Eltha, and one grandson, Hobart who homesteaded it beginning on May 25, 1902. It was located halfway between Zenia and Kettenpom Valley on the road to Lake Mountain, Mina, and Covelo on Lassik ancestral territory.<sup>228</sup>

Dudley Davis was elected Trinity County supervisor in 1905. He served from 1905-1909, representing the territory southeast of South Fork Mountain. At the same time, he was the judicial judge of southeastern Trinity County, and his offices were located in his home at Seven Cedars. The property was named Seven Cedars as there were seven large Cedars in a group nearby when the house was built. It was located about 1 mile east of Kettenpom Peak at a large spring. The Davis family had five sons.<sup>229</sup>

Kettenpom Valley, six miles east, originally had the only school close to Seven Cedars. It was called, unsurprisingly, Kettenpom Valley School, also a private school. Each day the five Davis children, and other neighboring students, walked or rode horseback to school for a round trip of 12 miles. Perhaps the distance became intolerable because from 1907 to 1909, the school was held at the Davis home instead. It is assumed that this school was the one referred to as the Seven Cedars School. The next year, the Simpson brothers, who owned a homestead near Seven Cedars, put up a permanent log schoolhouse on the western slope of Kettenpom Peak, about a mile west of Seven Cedars.<sup>230</sup> That public school became known as Peak School replacing the Seven Cedars home school. Peak School opened during the 1908-09 school year and operated for years until it was suspended (closed) prior to the 1940-41 school year.<sup>231</sup>

See also [Peak School](#) and [Kettenpom Valley School](#).



The map above is from [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), page 162.

<sup>228</sup> Keter, Thomas S., "A Compendium of People and Places for the North Fork Eel River Region during the Homesteading Era", [http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people\\_and\\_places\\_nferw\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://wordpress.solararch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/people_and_places_nferw_vol_1.pdf), 2017. Accessed March 7, 2023. 164.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 29 and 165.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>231</sup> *Warrant Records*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

## Southern Trinity High School

While taxes were being paid by all residents of the county to support the historic Trinity County High School, which had attendance centers in both Weaverville and Hayfork, the parents of high school-age students in Southern Trinity had to find room and board for their children in either the Fortuna, Eureka or Weaverville communities in order for them to attend high school. This was usually accomplished at a family's own expense. While families could apply for some assistance from the Trinity High School District, the amount received was not equal to the full cost of travel, room, and board.<sup>232</sup>

By the winter of 1969, the idea of establishing a high school in the Southern Trinity area was being discussed by community members in the Mad River/Dinsmore/Ruth area, the Mad River Elementary School District, and the County Superintendent, Robert Gravette. The discussion moved to the Trinity County High School Board of Trustees where the issue most debated seemed to be whether to create a two-year or a four-year high school and, of course, how it would be funded. It was decided that even though an elementary school district could provide a ninth-grade class, it was better to create a two-year high school attendance center as a satellite of the Trinity County High School located in Weaverville.<sup>233</sup>

Many different names were proposed for the school such as Sixth Rivers High School, Mad River High School, and Van Duzen High School. In the end, on May 27, 1969, the Governing Board of the Trinity County Joint Union High School District in Weaverville gave their final approval for the establishment of a 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade attendance center in the Van Duzen area of Southern Trinity, to be known as Southern Trinity High School.

The Board of Trustees for the County High School District agreed that it would rent classrooms for the Southern Trinity attendance center from the Mad River Joint School District. [Note that a "joint" district refers to one that encompasses two counties.] The Mad River Joint School District agreed to purchase two relocatable buildings for this purpose, which would be placed on the Van Duzen Elementary School site. One building was to have a folding partition in it so that it could either be used for two smaller classrooms or as one large room. Each building would consist of three modules. Each module was to measure 10' x 32'. A business to provide the buildings was identified and a contract was signed with the county superintendent representing the Mad River Joint School District as their negotiating agent. Originally the buildings were to be delivered and installed by mid-August 1969. However, work on the foundations did not even begin until the last week of August. With school to be open on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, plans were quickly made to utilize some of the rooms at the Van Duzen Elementary School itself. The elementary teachers gave up their lounge. In addition, the library and the multipurpose room were also adapted and together they made three classrooms for the high school.<sup>234</sup> The high school was opened with twenty-two students and three teachers, seven students more than what had been expected during the planning stages.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Smith, Donald W., "The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School", California State University, Chico, 1975, 22.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 24-27.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 36-37; and "Trinity County School Bulletin", Trinity County Office of Education, June 1969, front page.

<sup>235</sup> Smith, Donald W., "The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School", California State University, Chico, 1975, 19.

About two weeks after school opened for the year, six trucks with low-bed trailers arrived carrying the new buildings. A crane also arrived to unload and set up the buildings on the foundations that had been poured three weeks prior. At that point, the buildings had to be bolted together, seams had to be sealed, the floor tiled, the roofs sealed, electrical connections made, and chalkboards installed. The Southern Trinity High School finally moved into its new home at the end of October 1969.<sup>236</sup>

On April 17, 1969, Mr. Campbell P. Minor, High School District Superintendent, sent out a notice seeking teachers who would be interested in “pioneering” a new high school, independent of the County High School, “in a beautiful location”. They received five applications but proceeded to advertise again on April 25 and June 12. On June 27, 1969, Donald W. Smith was selected as the principal/teacher and he selected two other teachers, Marelyn Johnson [no spelling error], and Joseph J. Wagner.<sup>237</sup> Donald Smith had about a month to accomplish the following things:

1. To develop a schedule of classes
2. To write a faculty handbook and a student handbook
3. To determine the curriculum and to write the courses of study



The Vinnell Corporation building containing the two classrooms for the social studies and math and science programs.



View of the student locker room which was constructed between the two Vinnell Corporation building.

<sup>236</sup> Smith, Donald W., “The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School”, California State University, Chico, 1975, 37.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 30.

4. To order school supplies and equipment
5. To prepare for registration day
6. To find suitable housing for the other two teachers<sup>238</sup>

Thankfully, at least some of the equipment was obtained from Hayfork High School. It had been equipment that was considered surplus or was not being used and was graciously offered by the principal of that school. The Mad River Joint School District also pitched in and offered furniture. The County Office provided items as well. Even Lewiston Elementary provided some cafeteria tables on loan.<sup>239</sup>

Mr. Wagner, teacher, resigned at the end of the first year and was replaced by Ronald A. Garlick from Chico. Garlick was assigned to one of the homes at the Ruth School site. He was unsatisfied with the home he was assigned and when he was unable to convince the district to purchase a mobile home for him and his family, he was released from his contract before school even started. Two weeks before school was to open, Carol Lingo was employed in his stead.<sup>240</sup>

The new high school was given full interim accreditation during the 1972-73 school year so on May 31, 1973, ten seniors graduated from the new school, the first graduating class of Southern Trinity High School. The following year a fully accredited program was offered. In 1973 the high school became a four-year school with seven teachers, 69 students, and seven classrooms.<sup>241</sup>

The people of the Mad River, Dinsmore (in Humboldt County), and Ruth communities eventually attempted to gain some control of high school affairs so they elected a member of the Trinity County High School board from their area. They also petitioned to establish trustee areas on the board ensuring that they would always have one trustee representing their area. Not satisfied with this, and feeling that they were having to fight for everything they obtained from the High School Board of Trustees, they decided they wanted to form their own district completely separate from the county-wide high school district. The State Board of Education gave its approval to form a new unified district on September 12, 1974.<sup>242</sup>

The County Committee on School District Organization met to consider several different plans for the possible unification of all the schools in Southern Trinity, including the new high school. There were many hearings, much debate, and two elections to determine the outcome of the unification proposal. Finally, as of July 1, 1976, a new unified school district was formed in the Southern part of Trinity County to incorporate all of the existing schools including the high school, Mad River Joint School District, and the Hoaglin-Zenia Union Elementary District.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 56-57.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., viii.

<sup>242</sup> Smith, Donald W., "The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School", California State University, Chico, 1975, 68 – 74.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 75.





**Accrediting Commission For Secondary Schools**  
 1499 BAYSHORE HIGHWAY • BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA 94010 • PHONE (415) 697-7711

June 29, 1973

Mr. Donald W. Smith, Principal  
 Southern Trinity High School  
 Star Route, Box 155  
 Bridgeville, California 95546

Dear Mr. Smith:

We are pleased to announce that the officers of the Accrediting Commission for Secondary Schools have examined the preliminary visitation report submitted by the team which visited your school recently on behalf of this Association and have authorized the granting of an interim term of accreditation. The term of accreditation for Southern Trinity High School is effective as of this date and extends through June 30, 1975.

May we congratulate your Board of Trustees, you and your staff on the educational program which has been developed and on the facilities provided for implementing that program. We trust that you will continue to keep attention carefully focused on the quality of both your process and product.

Sincerely,

J. Wesley Berry  
 Executive Director

JWB:JJ

CC: Steve C. Searcy, Superintendent,  
 Trinity County Joint Union High School District  
 Vern Robinson, Director, Office of Relations  
 with Schools, UC  
 n B. Landis, Member,  
 eliminary Visitation Committee  
 da Nystrom, Member,  
 eliminary Visitation Committee

**Southern Trinity High School**

Mad River, California  
 Trinity County Joint Union High School District

This Certifies That  
**Dean Alexander Halvorson**  
 has satisfactorily completed the Course of Study prescribed  
 for Graduation and is therefore entitled to this

**Diploma**

GIVEN this 31st day of May, 1973



President, Board of Trustees  
  
 Clerk, Board of Trustees

District Superintendent  
  
 Principal



The quadrangle between the two sets of buildings.



The north end of the Speed-Space building showing the entrances of the restrooms and the custodial storage room.

## Van Duzen School

The school was named after the River of the same name. The river had been named by an “exploring party” after one of its members, James Van Duzen.<sup>244</sup>

There were several different schools established along the Van Duzen River throughout history. The first school was a log cabin located near Anderson Ford in Mad River. That school was eventually closed due to a lack of student enrollment.<sup>245</sup>

A second school was at Buck Mountain and another school was built “near Cobbs” in Humboldt County, but that

school was destroyed by flooding.<sup>246</sup> Interestingly, none of these schools or school locations are listed in the historic school records located at the Trinity County Office of Education. However, the school district of Mad River, to which Van Duzen eventually belonged, was listed first in the records of school visits in 1898. Like many other schools in Trinity County, it’s very possible that Van Duzen School began as a private school paid for by the parents of the students who attended and was not a public school. Or it is also possible, as an article in the local paper in 1960 indicates, that the early Van Duzen School was actually located in the Bridgeville School District just across the county line in Humboldt County.<sup>247</sup>

In 1960, 17 students from the lower Mad River area attended Van Duzen School in the Bridgeville District. As a new plywood mill had just been built in the area and an influx of families with children was anticipated to crowd that school. However, the Bridgeville Trustees were said to prefer not to take in students living outside the district. That would mean that the



*Van Duzen School c.1962*

<sup>244</sup> Bright, William, *1500 California Place Names, Their Origin and Meaning*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998,161.

<sup>245</sup> Canale, Peggy, Ed., “Community Treasures: An historical, anecdotal, and pictorial account of our community” by the 3/4<sup>th</sup> grade class of Van Duzen Elementary School, 2000, 4.

<sup>246</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District, April 22, 2022.

<sup>247</sup> “School Boundaries Plague Mad River as Area Booms”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 7, 1960.



17 students mentioned above would have to travel about 18 miles over a hazardous mountain road to the school at Ruth. With the present Mad River School scheduled to be moved and rebuilt to make way for the Ruth Dam, there was a lot of confusion and concern about what would happen. The parents and the community wanted to keep all of their children together by changing school boundaries and allowing their children to attend a school closer to their homes.<sup>248</sup>

A petition to annex an estimated 30 acres from Humboldt County to the Mad River School District was considered in May of 1960. Under discussion was the current Ruth School and the possibility of a new school on the lower Van Duzen. A school bond was also discussed which could be paid back through Forest Reserve funding. At that time, 63 students attended the Van Duzen School and 23 attended the Mad River School.<sup>249</sup> After many public hearings and decisions made by both counties, the section of Humboldt County was, indeed, determined to be joined to the Mad River School District, and a new school was to be built in Trinity County located somewhere above the high water level of the dam to be called Van Duzen.<sup>250</sup>

The Van Duzen School of the Mad River School District was said to have “come into being” in 1962, according to a thesis written by a student from Chico State College who had visited Trinity County in the early 1970s.<sup>251</sup> In March of 1962, an article in the paper discussed the low bid for building the new school at Van Duzen.<sup>252</sup> The date of the completed school building was 1963, and was 7,200 square feet. The cost of the building was \$200,267.<sup>253</sup>

By May of 1969, a Trinity County High School attendance center (branch campus) was also established at Van Duzen. It was to be held on the Van Duzen School site in relocatable buildings, but the buildings were not in place when school began in September of that year. Consequently, the high school utilized classrooms in the Van Duzen elementary school until the buildings were completed in October 1969.

On September 18, 1970, the elementary school building suffered a fire in a new classroom that created extensive damage to the roof and some damage to the carpeting. This new building had only been in use for twelve school days. A faulty gas furnace was determined to be the cause. Until the damage could be repaired, half of the elementary children had to attend school in the cafeteria.<sup>254</sup>

Curiously, according to the California School Directory found on the California Department of Education’s website, Van Duzen Elementary School wasn’t opened until July 1, 1980, the same date as Ruth School.<sup>255</sup> Perhaps this is the date that both schools merged into the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District as that district first unified in 1976.

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<sup>248</sup> “School Boundaries Plague Mad River as Area Booms, *The Trinity Journal*, January 7, 1960.

<sup>249</sup> “Hearing on Petition”, *The Trinity Journal*, May 12, 1960.

<sup>250</sup> “Mad River to Get Section of Humboldt County”, *The Trinity Journal*, February 4, 1960; and “Mad River School Boundary Change Approved by Bd”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 14, 1960.

<sup>251</sup> Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 33.

<sup>252</sup> “Construction bid for Van Duzen School Studied”, *The Trinity Journal*, March 29, 1962.

<sup>253</sup> This was referred to in handwritten notes found at the Trinity County Office of Education.

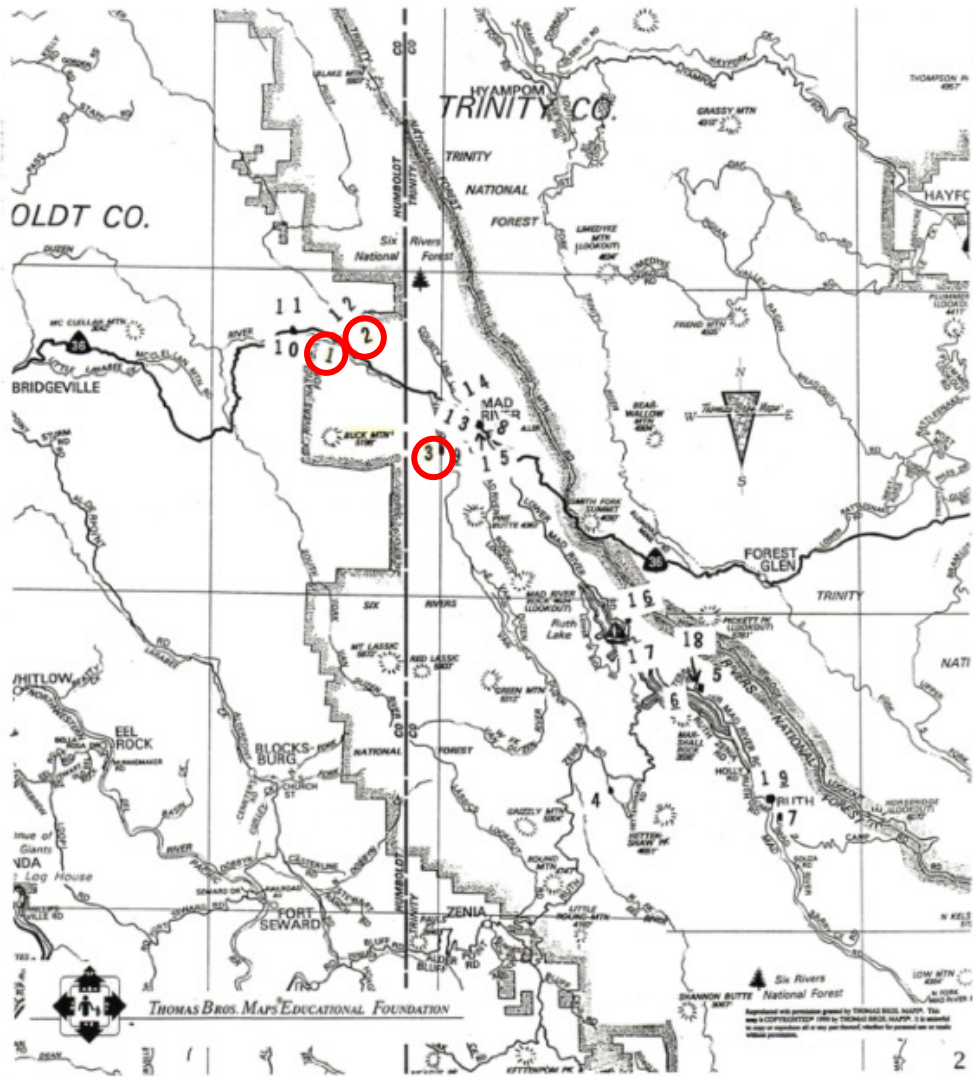
<sup>254</sup> “Fires Create Problems for Two Schools in the County”, *Trinity County School Bulletin*, October 1970, 2.

<sup>255</sup> *California School Directory*, [www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory/details?cdscode=53738336053805](http://www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory/details?cdscode=53738336053805), accessed on March 5, 2023.



# VAN DUZEN ELEMENTARY

## Mad River, California



The map above is from "Community Treasures: An historical, anecdotal, and pictorial account of our community" created by the 3/4<sup>th</sup> grade class of Van Duzen Elementary School, 2000. Peggy Canale was the Editor and the classroom teacher. It indicates that #1 is "The Old Van Duzen School (near the Weekender); #2 is Old Van Duzen School (Near the Humboldt County Line); and #3 is Van Duzen School today. Used with permission.



Photos of Van Duzen School are from the Trinity County Office of Education's Historic Photo Collection

## Zenia School District

The town of “Zenia” in Lassik ancestral territory, is said to be either the name given to it by a girl who lived at Blocksburg, a community some miles away, or was named “Zenia” by postmaster George Croyden, after a girl by the same name. Zenia was certainly a better option than the original name: “Poison Camp”. This was named by white men whose cattle were poisoned by larkspur in the area in the 1860s. In some references, it’s said that the school there was at one time known as “Poison Camp School”.<sup>256</sup>

The Zenia School was said to have begun in July of 1897 upon the division of the Hettenshaw School District.<sup>257</sup> Because there are no official records of the school existing at this time as a public school, it had to have begun as a private school, paid for by the parents of the children who attended. This is also interesting information because in the records of an official school visit two years later in 1899, Hettenshaw School was noted as “Hettenshaw (Zenia P.O. Poison Camp)”. Similarly in the records of a visit in 1906, the title of the same district was given as “Hettenshaw, Poison Camp”.<sup>258</sup> It’s clear that the early schools in Trinity County history were often moved due to the needs of the community and the changing number of children in specific areas. Sometimes the schools were renamed, sometimes not. It makes for complications in telling each school’s story. This appears to be one of those incidents.



The first Zenia Schoolhouse was said to be located a short distance outside of the town of Zenia on the south side of the road across from the Zenia Guard Station.<sup>259</sup> The school was located on one acre of land donated to the “Hettenshaw School District” which was receiving state apportionments

(funding) by 1876. This appears to mean that the public school district, Hettenshaw, had claimed the private school called Zenia as one of its own schools. The land was donated for the Zenia schoolhouse by store owner, Samuel Ledgerwood in 1898 and was located on the Southwestern corner of his property. The witness on the handwritten deed was E. F. Burgess and it was recorded by R. L. Carter (see a copy of the deed on page 78).<sup>260</sup>

<sup>256</sup> “Zenia”, *Trinity Historical Society Yearbook*, 1955, 28; and Durham, David, *California’s Geographic Names*, Quill Driver Books, 1998, 172 found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zenia,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zenia,_California), accessed September 30, 2022.

<sup>257</sup> Reneau, Susan, “Burgess Recalls Zenia School History”; unidentified newspaper article, undated, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education; and *The Trinity Journal*, January 26, 1856.

<sup>258</sup> *Record of School Visits*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>259</sup> Jones, Alice Goen, Ed., “*Trinity County Historic Sites*”, Trinity County Historical Society, Weaverville, 1981, 355-356.

<sup>260</sup> “Deed of Grant”, Civil Code of California, 1092, 25/657 Deeds, signed February 7, 1898, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.



Henry M. Marvel, later of Ferndale, taught the very first year, in 1897, for half a year.<sup>261</sup> That year the ages of the students ranged from three years to eighteen years old, with about eighteen students in attendance.<sup>262</sup> The most students enrolled at any one time was 35 or 38 students (depending on the source). Following Mr. Marvel was John S. Reid who later became the County District Attorney. Joseph McKnight was the next teacher who later became the Superintendent of Schools, completing the term of office for his predecessor in 1910. Following Mr. McKnight there was a long line of teachers coming from as far away as San Francisco, Oakland, and Gilroy.<sup>263</sup>

On February 7, 1898, one acre of land was deeded to the “Hettenshaw School District”, donated by store owner, Samuel Ledgerwood<sup>264</sup> and was located on the Southwestern corner of his property. The witness on the handwritten deed was E. F. Burgess and it was recorded by R. L. Carter (see a copy below).<sup>265</sup> This land was set aside for the Zenia Schoolhouse. Hettenshaw District was well established and had been receiving state apportionments (funding) since around 1876, so it appears to mean that the public school district, Hettenshaw, had claimed the private school called Zenia as one of its own (public) schools.

In January of 1901, Zenia School *District* was established as its own public school district by the county and began receiving apportionments directly from the state. It was visited by the County Superintendent of Schools that same year. Miss Lillian T. White was the teacher at the time with 19 students enrolled and all were doing well in their studies. Her salary was \$65 per month.<sup>266</sup> For the spring term of the 1902-03 school year, the school didn’t open until nearly the end of April in 1903.<sup>267</sup> In the fall of 1903, Miss. White was still teaching with Mrs. C. B. Rice as the Clerk of the school board.<sup>268</sup> That fall term, the school closed for the winter vacation sometime before November 7, 1903.<sup>269</sup> It was not unusual at that time in history to have a very long winter break between the fall and spring terms.

Miss White had continued as the teacher in Zenia during the fall of 1904. She was still paid \$65 per month.<sup>270</sup> By June 21, 1904, a person by the name of Aldah L. Levato was listed as the teacher of 16 students. This information was hand-written on lined paper and pasted into the school visit book. There was also a handwritten expense claim addressed to Superintendent Lizzie Fox, stating that it took three days to make the trip to the school for the official visit by the Deputy Superintendent, Harry C. Jeans, and the cost was \$3 per day with the “expense on horse” an additional \$1.50. The report of that visit listed the student’s reading and arithmetic progress as only “Fair” but their language was “Extra good”. Curiously, the official recording of a

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Reneau, Susan, “Burgess recalls Zenia School History”, unidentified newspaper article, undated, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education; and “Trinity County Schools Growing With California”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.; and a copy of the Deed of Grant, recorded on March 9, 1898, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education. ; and “A Short History of the Schools in Trinity County”, *The Trinity Journal*, 1956, 7.

<sup>265</sup> “Deed of Grant”, Civil Code of California, 1092, 25/657 Deeds, signed February 7, 1898, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>266</sup> *Warrant Records and A Record of School Visits*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 159.

<sup>267</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 18, 1903.

<sup>268</sup> “Districts, Clerks, Teachers”, *The Trinity Journal*, October 17, 1903.

<sup>269</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 7, 1903.

<sup>270</sup> “Districts, Clerks, Teachers”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.



visit just a day later listed the teacher as Miss Lillian White<sup>271</sup> also with 16 students, so the hand-written notes had to have either been pasted under the wrong year, or Aldah Levato was a substitute for Miss White or Aldah Levato had resigned suddenly. Confirming the information in another official visit, this time in October of 1904, the record indeed states that Miss Lillian T. White continued from the spring of 1904 to teach the autumn term of the same year as well.

Miss Ethel McRae taught in the spring of 1905. That year the school had gained a student and all were doing well in each of the subject areas.<sup>272</sup>

Miss Harriet N. Deering was teaching in June of 1906 for \$75 per month. She was an experienced teacher of 12 years. The length of the spring term that year was four months. There were 14 students enrolled and they were reported as being attentive and studious. They also had a set of new "Readers" and their math books were from the state series, however they had no library and no shelves to hold books, and the condition of their schoolhouse "should be improved".<sup>273</sup>



In September of 1911, Miss Leah Guthrie of Rohnerville was teaching at Zenia.<sup>274</sup> But by the fall term of 1912, Laura E. Thayer was teaching there for \$75 per month. In the spring of 1912 Edward F. Burgess Jr. returned to teach at Zenia,

also for the same salary.<sup>275</sup> Miss Mary Louise Joseph from Douglas City was teaching in the spring of 1914.<sup>276</sup> A year later, in the spring of 1915, Miss Joseph (who became Mrs. Albert Burgess) was still teaching at Zenia, but in 1916 Edward Burgess returned yet again to Zenia to teach there.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>271</sup> *A Record of School Visits*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 224.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 230; and "School Notes", *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.

<sup>273</sup> *A Record of School Visits*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 273.

<sup>274</sup> "Schools of Trinity Supplied with Teachers", *The Trinity Journal*, September 2, 1911.

<sup>275</sup> *Warrant Records*, Historic Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, and *The Trinity Journal*, April 6, 1912.

<sup>276</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, July 4, 1914.

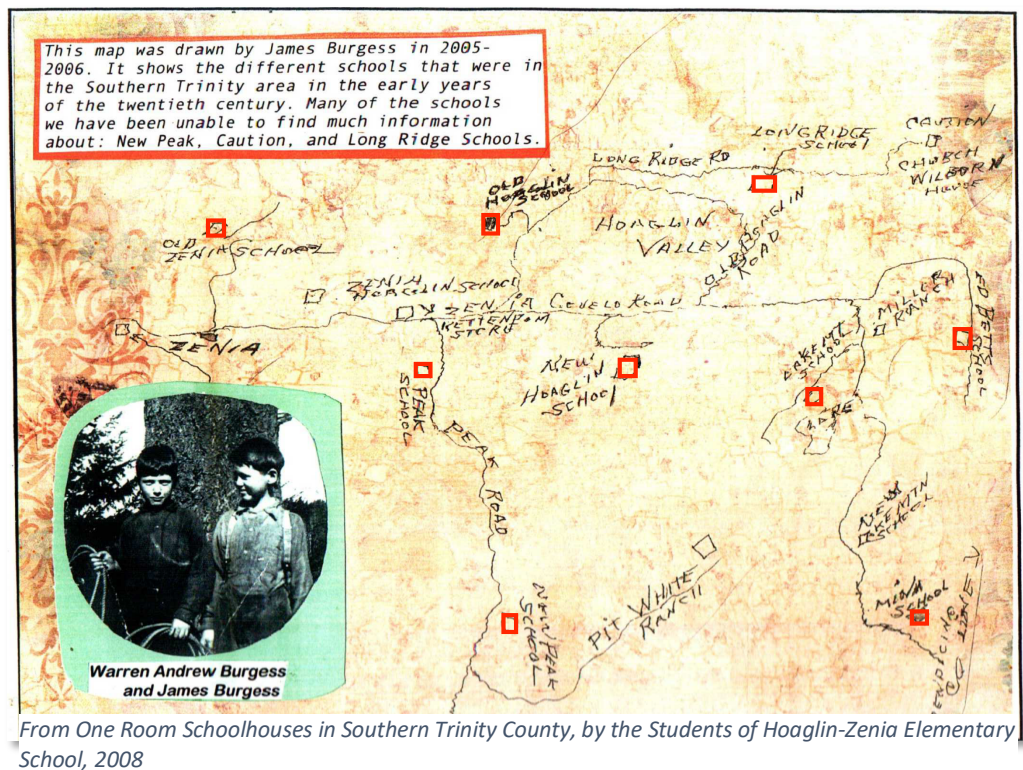
<sup>277</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, April 3, 1915 and April 1, 1916,

Another Zenia schoolhouse was said to be built north of the current post office in 1916<sup>278</sup> or the summer of 1917<sup>279</sup> In an official school visit on October 11, 1916, a note says that a new schoolhouse “will be constructed for Zenia School in [school year] 1916-17”.<sup>280</sup> It was also said it would be erected in a better location<sup>281</sup>. The new schoolhouse was built by Edward F. Burgess, George W. Counts, and Tomas C. Records, and the lumber and materials were paid for through a special school tax.<sup>282</sup>

In March of 1919, the school underwent repairs. The floor was re-laid and the school house was finished in oak, “making it very attractive. It [was]... one of the best school houses in the county”.<sup>283</sup> The school had originally been built of split sugar pine brought from Grizzly Mountain. At the same time, the teacher’s and students’ desks were also made of sugar pine.<sup>284</sup>

On May 3, 1919, another deed was filed regarding land for “the use and benefit of the Zenia School District”. The use of the property would cost “Ten dollars Gold Coin of the United States of America” and was given to the Zenia School “as long as said land shall be used for school purposes” by Henry Miller, Maybelle Miller, and Samuel E. Ledgerwood. The description of the property

begins: “at a black-oak tree, 25 in. in diameter, Scribed ‘B. M.’ being a Bench Mark tree on the survey of the Pauls Point-Mad River Road, Near the Zenia Store in Sec. 15, Town. 3 South, Range 6 East, Humboldt Meridian...”<sup>285</sup> It was this new building, built on this



<sup>278</sup> “One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School”, 2008; Jones, Alice Goen, Ed., *Trinity County Historical Sites*, Trinity County Historical Society, 1981, 354; and Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Superintendent of Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District and teacher at Zenia School, August 31, 2022.

<sup>279</sup> “Schools are opening”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 27, 1917.

<sup>280</sup> *A Record of School Visits*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 548.

<sup>281</sup> “Schools are opening”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 27, 1917.

<sup>282</sup> Reneau, Susan, “Burgess recalls Zenia School History”, unidentified newspaper article, undated, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>283</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, March 8, 1919.

<sup>284</sup> Burgess, Edward Francis, “Zenia School”, *Short History of the Schools in Trinity County*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 7.

<sup>285</sup> From a copy of the actual deed, May 3, 1919, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

property, which later became the Grange Hall also known as the Community Center. The Community Center had actually become somewhat controversial as the property was to revert to the original landowners should it not be used for the school. The issue was finally resolved and the original one-acre plot of land was recently (in about 2017) deeded back to the original owners.<sup>286</sup>

Other teachers who taught at Zenia School at various times include Mrs. Esther Short (Covelo); Miss Doris Mullins (Weaverville); Mrs. Isabelle Sanchez (Redway/Garberville); Mrs. Jane Hiends (Hoaglin); Hannah Watson; Verna Marshall (who became Mrs. Reynolds), and Don McRaw.<sup>287</sup> Edward Burgess of Zenia came and went as the teacher there at least four different times. If there was an award for the person who taught the most school terms in one school in the early history of schools in Trinity County, Mr. Burgess likely would have won that award. In addition to his teaching in 1912 and 1916, he also shows up in school district directories as teaching in Zenia for at least the school years of 1920-21, 1921-22, 1922-23, 1924-25, 1933-34, 1935-36, 1936-37, 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40, and 1941-42. The gap in the school years between 1924-25 and 1933-34 may only be because those directories have not yet been found!

From 1935 to 1937, Zenia school received Federal Indian Aid due to the significant number of Native students enrolled there.<sup>288</sup>

In the 1950s, there were two teachers, Mrs. Margaret Miller and Mr. Howard Miller, as the population of students had by then grown to require an additional teacher.<sup>289</sup> In 1956, there were 36 students at Zenia.<sup>290</sup> As there was no janitor, the students took turns sweeping the floor and cleaning the desks. Many students rode horses to school so a little barn was kept there with hay to keep the horses fed while the students worked.<sup>291</sup> In March of 1956, Mrs. Blanche Rumley wrote in the local paper that,

The Zenia and Hoeglin [sic] schools are in season now. It is rugged on the parents having to transport their children over several miles of our muddy and slick roads. The Zenia school is still in two sessions which makes six trips a day for the parents getting their children to school and back home.<sup>292</sup>

On August 30, 1956, a newspaper article was published by Blanche Rumley stating that new school books had arrived at the Zenia Post Office and that the Zenia School opened on August 20 with Miss Louise McCormick as the teacher for the year, having returned from her vacation in Los Angeles.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Supahan, Sarah, email communication with Canale, Peggy, Superintendent of Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District and teacher at Zenia School, August 31, 2022.

<sup>287</sup> Reneau, Susan, "Burgess recalls Zenia School History", unidentified newspaper article, undated, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>288</sup> "Statistics of Elementary Schools", *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>289</sup> Burgess, Edward F, "Zenia School", *Short History of the Schools in Trinity County*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 7; "Trinity County Schools Growing With California", *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition.

<sup>290</sup> A Short History of the Schools in Trinity County", *The Trinity Journal*, 1956, 8; "Trinity County Schools Growing With California", *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition.

<sup>291</sup> "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School", 2008.

<sup>292</sup> Rumley, Blanche, "Zenia", *The Trinity Journal*, March 1, 1956.

<sup>293</sup> Rumley, Blanche, "Zenia", *The Trinity Journal*, August 30, 1956.

Discussions began in the spring of 1957 regarding the potential unification of Hoaglin and Zenia School Districts. A meeting was held on April 4th to discuss the idea and to answer questions. There was a very large crowd in attendance, and the meeting was declared “informative”. The procedure was then said to be underway to bring the unification to a vote.<sup>294</sup> A year later, in 1958, the Zenia and the Hoaglin School Districts merged, becoming one school district serving a larger area. The Andy Burgess Family donated property on which the new school was built. Inside the school building was an accordion partition dividing a large room into two classrooms. Later a kitchen and a small cafeteria were added and a wall was built in place of the partition. The first graduation was held at this combined school in 1959, graduating Barbara Sturgess, Dorothy McEwen, Jimmy Burgess, Sandy Whitney, and Ed Byrnes.<sup>295</sup>

In 1977, Zenia was considered one of two one-room schools in Trinity County.<sup>296</sup> Today the school is called Hoaglin-Zenia and is part of the Southern Trinity Joint Unified School District.

See also [Hoaglin School District/Hettenpome](#)

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<sup>294</sup> Hall, Daretha, “Hoaglin Highlights”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 31, 1957.

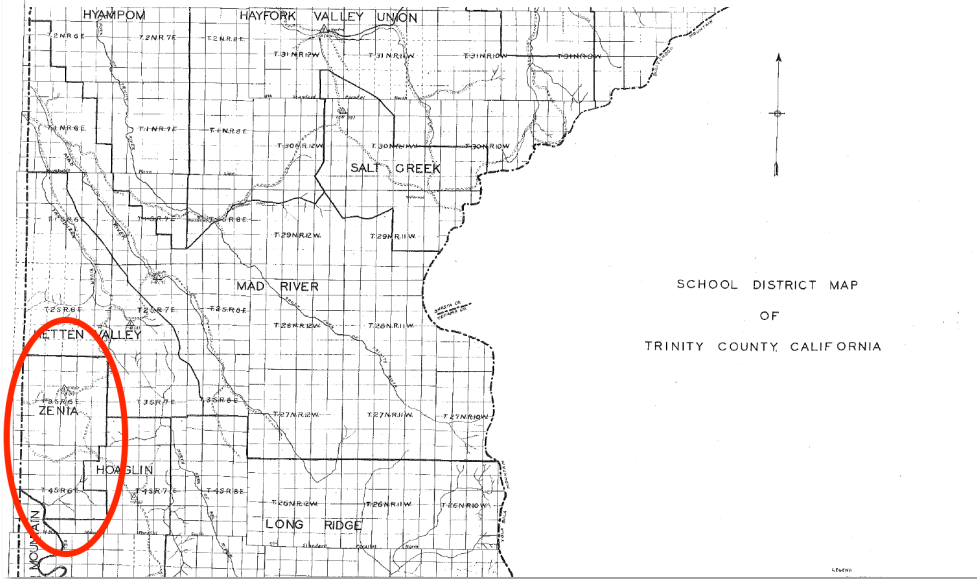
<sup>295</sup> “One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School”, 2008.

<sup>296</sup> Brown, Darlene L., (Administrative Assistant, The Office of the Trinity County Superintendent of Schools, Courthouse, Weaverville, CA.) 1977, Letter to Jan Parrott, Editor, CA School Boards Association Newsgram, Sacramento.





At one time this was the Zenia school building, but became housing for the teacher also known as a "teacherage". The car out front was the first car owned by the Trinity County Office of Education for traveling to school sites – a 1957 Chevy.



1947 Map found at the Trinity County Office of Education

Deed of Grant.  
[Civil Code of California Sec. 1092]

I, Samuel E. Lidgwood do hereby grant to Wittershow School District free of all mortgages, liens and encumbrances, all that well known, situated in Trinity County, California, described as follows: In Township Three South Range Six East Humboldt Meridian described as follows: Commencing at the South East corner of South East quarter of North West quarter of Section 15. Running South Eight Rods North thence Eight Rods West, Thence Twenty Rods South Thence Eight Rods East to the place of beginning.

Witness my hand this fourth day of February, 1898.

S. E. Lidgwood.

Witness

E. F. Burgess.

State of California,  
County of Trinity } ss.

On this seventh day of February, 1898, personally appeared before me, Edward F. Burgess a Deputy Co. Clerk in and for said County, Samuel E. Lidgwood to me personally known to be the individual described, and who executed the foregoing instrument, and he acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and official seal this seventh day of February, 1898.

R. L. Carter Co. Clerk  
E. F. Burgess Deputy.

Recorded at the Request of Lizzie A. Fr.,  
March 9th A.D. 1898. at 13 Min. past 11 AM.

R. L. Carter  
Recorder





*Ready to board the Zenia School Bus, c. early 1960s. According to LaVerna Bartlett, the tall boy is Jimmy Burgess. Next to him is Tom Benninghoven. The students were very proud of their new school bus! Photo courtesy of Peggy Canale*



*The sign says "Hoaglin-Zenia School", photo dated 1974, made by the Zenia 4-H.*