

Salyer School

The town area called Salyer was established in 1918 when a new post office was located there inside a local store. It was named for Mr. and Mrs. Charles Salyer, two residents of the area. Before deciding on the name “Salyer”, one proposed name was the Tsnungwe’s name for the area. That name is *miy-me’*.

Salyer School was said to be located “between the United States Forest Service equipment area and the Wayside Chapel” on Highway 299.¹ Both of these landmarks still exist today in Salyer (2023).

Salyer School is not listed in any of the Annual Reports of Districts or in District Directories found at the Trinity County Office of Education. Consequently, local newspapers were researched for more information about it. One reason Salyer School isn’t in the education records might be that it was a school within the Lower Trinity School District and only districts were reported in those records, not individual schools. This supposition is supported by an article in one newspaper in April 1919 when it identified the school as “The Lower Trinity School at Salyer”. Miss Elida Ford of Blue Lake was the teacher at the time.²

Only two mentions of the school throughout the 1920s have been found so far. The first article in 1925 refers to the school as, “The public school at Salyer” and that the school would be open for the “summer term” on Monday, August 17 with Miss Marguerite Baker in charge. Miss Baker was a recent graduate of the State Teachers College in Arcata.³ The second mention in 1929 states that Miss Nora Raab of Arcata, who had taught at the Willow Creek School sometime before, was engaged to teach the school at Salyer. She was following Miss LaVerne Larsen who resigned from the position to “accept a better one” in Arcata.⁴

On November 3, 1932, the Salyer School celebrated Halloween with a party. It was described in the Blue Lake Advocate newspaper this way:

The schoolhouse was beautifully decorated, under the supervision of Miss Vera Rourke, teacher. There was an unusual crowd, more than could be seated. An interesting program was put on by the pupils (31 of them,) and then came the apple biting contest, what fun! The apples had pennies in them too, for a surprise. Outside was an immense bonfire, and an hour of play was indulged in by young and old. All the older ones seem to go back to their childhood days. Then came refreshments of sandwiches, pumpkin pie, and hot chocolate. It was one of the nicest parties ever held at the Salyer school. The singing was under the supervision of Mrs. E. Brizard, who also read “Little Orphan Annie” in her delightful way.⁵

In May 1933, teacher Miss Vera Rourke supervised a special school event. This time it was a picnic and program to mark the closing of the Salyer School for the summer. The program consisted of: “[A] Song, Hail the Glad Vacation—By the school. [A] Play, “When Father Goes On

¹ McGowan, Katherine R., “Organization of small school districts on lower Trinity”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 17, 1972. 10.

² “Trinity Schools Reopening”, *Blue Lake Advocate*, April 12, 1919.

³ “Salyer School Starts Monday”, *Blue Lake Advocate*, August 15, 1925.

⁴ “New Teacher For Salyer School”, *Blue Lake Advocate*, March 2, 1929.

⁵ “At Salyer and Vicinity On the Trinity: Salyer School had a Big Party”, *Blue Lake Advocate*, November 5, 1932.

a Diet,” by Rose Noble, Marie Kimsey, Taylor Henderson, Lola White, Wilma Bussell, Delmer Kimsey, Thomas Jackson. [A] Dutch dance with Costumes—[by] Dona Mae and Marjorie Crouse, Irene Kimsey, Wilma and Oswald Bussell, Thomas Jackson, Lyle Eberspecher, [and] Delmer Kimsey. [A] Song By [the] School—Bring Back My School Days to Me. [And a] May Pole Dance and Song, [with] pink crepe dresses for the girls. [The] streamers will be pink and white.”

In June of 1933, it was reported that a program and a picnic took place at the Salyer School again under the supervision of teacher Miss Vera Rourke. It was described as follows:

A very interesting program was presented by the pupils, which was enjoyed by a large crowd of parents and friends. The following are the eighth grade graduates from the school: Marie Kimsey, Taylor Henderson, Lola White and Rose Noble.⁶

Another Halloween party was held at the school in November of 1934. This time a new teacher, Miss Vera Griffith, was in charge. The weather was stormy so the event was held indoors where the children played games, bobbed for apples, and ‘fished in the fish pond’.⁷



Photo contributed by Dena Magdaleno, Tsnungwe Elder. Salyer School c. 1930; Known students: back row from left John Henderson, Wes Ammon, Les Ammon; middle row from left Theresa Henderson; front row from left Jubie Ammon, Junie Ammon, ?, and possibly a Bussell.

⁶ “Salyer School Enjoys Picnic and Program, *The Trinity Journal*, June 3, 1933.

⁷ “From Salyer”, *Blue Lake Advocate*, November 10, 1934.

Danny Ammon, Tsnungwe tribal member and language expert, provided the names of some of the Tsnungwe Tribal members who attended the Salyer School:

1893 Jessie Campbell (Dartt)
1893 Martha Campbell (Ziegler Ferguson)
1893 Mary Walker Campbell
1930s Les Ammon
1930s Wes Ammon
1930s Chauncey "Jube" Ammon
1930s Junius Ammon
1940s Charles Toby Ammon
1940s Phillip Ammon
 Bennie Kimsey bus driver
1910s Cora Zeigler
1930s Janice Taylor
1930s Vera Kimsey

In 1936, the teacher had been Miss Helen Smith but she left in January for a position in the Arcata Elementary School due to another teacher's death. Mrs. Foster filled the vacancy at Salyer.⁸

In 1939, a beautification project was underway at the school undertaken by the enterprising Salyer School students as well as the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA), under the leadership of Principal, Claude Kisner. The work was declared by the local paper as "Keeping pace with larger schools located in towns having a greater number of conveniences and more money to work with."⁹ Students were working five days a week to plant shrubs and trees for "Conservation Week" to begin on March 7. The paper declared that the boys' and girls' interest in the project "has been stimulated to the extent that it is no longer considered work but play instead".¹⁰ The students transplanted wildflowers "according to a well-arranged plan" and were learning about the wildflowers in the vicinity. They had more than twenty varieties of plants. It was noted that not only were they gaining valuable information about their environment, but they were also "growing in power" to plan, organize, and carry out a successful group activity.¹¹

There were only brief mentions of the school in 1940 and 1941, enough to know it still existed at that time. Then in 1942 under the leadership of teacher Rose M. Dartt, the school was credited with being the first "in this district" to report on their activities as part of the Defense Savings Program for the war effort (The Second World War or WWII). This program had been started in California schools and was designed to encourage schoolchildren to help their country win the war. The plan was to buy defense stamps with any money they made. It was reported that the students and the teacher at Salyer did janitorial work, performed a play, and cleared up barnyards for scrap iron. The money raised from these activities went to buying defense stamps.¹² Defense stamps could be purchased at post offices and were available in denominations of ten cents, twenty-five cents, fifty cents, one dollar, and five dollars, and were

⁸ "Salyer Teacher Resigns, Accepts Arcata School", *The Trinity Journal*, January 3, 1936.

⁹ "Salyer School Students Beautify Grounds Tree Planting March 7", *The Trinity Journal*, Feb 23, 1939.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ "Around the County Schools", *The Trinity Journal*, April 15, 1937.

¹² "Salyer School Backs Defense Savings Plan", *The Trinity Journal*, March 5, 1942.

promoted as a way for children and others to accumulate funds for the purchase of savings bonds to help the war effort.¹³ Rose Dartt was still teaching at the school in February of 1943.¹⁴

Several years later, in 1949, it was reported that the school and the Salyer Community Wayside Chapel were coming together to organize a Christmas program at the Chapel which would include a play and then a chance to watch a movie.¹⁵

On June 2, 1950, teacher Mrs. Baney let the school out for summer vacation. Just prior to that, a school picnic was held at the East Fork Campground.¹⁶ However, in approximately 1946 the “Willow Forest School” at Willow Creek and the “Lower Trinity School at Salyer” had approved a merger into the Trinity Valley School District. In 1950, it was reported that a \$30,000 bond had been passed, and the district was applying for a state loan totaling \$132,000 to build an additional five classrooms and a utility room to the existing school at Willow Creek to house the other students.¹⁷ Consequently, the Salyer School was soon to be no more.

See also **Lower Trinity School District** and **Forest School**.

¹³ “World War II At Home”, *The National World War II Museum*, www.nationalww2museum.org, accessed December 31, 2023.

¹⁴ “Family Heads Will Register Next Monday”, *The Trinity Journal*, February 18, 1943.

¹⁵ Henderson, Jane Ann, “Salyer Correspondent”, *The Trinity Journal*, December 22, 1949.

¹⁶ Henderson, Jane Ann, “Salyer Correspondent”, *The Trinity Journal*, June 8, 1950.

¹⁷ “Trinity Valley School Bonds Passed”, *Blue Lake Advocate*, July 1, 1950.