

Blanchard Flat School District aka Blanchards Flat

Organized in 1901¹ and officially established on January 9, 1902, the Blanchard Flat School District was located south of the “Douglas City – Hayfork Road” in Wintu ancestral territory.²

In 1903, Miss Nellie M. Jordan taught there, and her students numbered nine. According to a report in the local newspaper, the students were progressing satisfactorily, and this note was added:

Nellie M. Hennessey, a graduate of the class of 1903, with high and noble aspirations is diligently pursuing the 10th, or supplementary grade work prescribed for our public schools. Annie Hennessey is a diligent pupil in the ninth grade and will be a member of the class of 1904. Recommended that when the school house is completed ample space will be provided and the room furnished with suitable blackboards, a library, and other essential furnishings.³

In 1904, the students were still taught by Miss Nellie M. Jordan for a salary of \$60 per month.⁴ Even after Nellie Jordan became the County Superintendent of Schools (1907-1910), she still taught there for a short period of time in the spring of 1907 before a new teacher, Miss Elizabeth Edwards of Sacramento, was hired. Edwards taught until 1908 when Miss Leora McCharles took over. In 1909, the school was taught by Miss Annie M. Hennessey. The next year she opened the school on September 26, 1910. Miss Hennessey taught for many years there until the school was suspended in 1916 because the daily attendance dipped to under five students and could no longer receive public funding.⁵



Blanchard Flat 1930s

In July of 1917, the school was re-established and a new schoolhouse was built on Browns Creek “across the creek from the R. K. Gibson ranch and a short distance above”. The school site was changed due to several school children living nearer to the new location. The school opened that year with Mrs. Agnes Rourke of Douglas City as the teacher.⁶ In the 1919-20 school year, Miss Verna Marshall took over as teacher at Blanchard Flat.⁷ Miss Marshall made \$90 per month but had only one student enrolled. Not surprisingly, a note during a school visit indicated that the “Wants of School” were “More pupils”.⁸ More students did indeed enroll because the school district continued classes for nineteen years and then lapsed on May 11, 1920, along with several other small school districts that year. The district’s county funding of \$47.38, and state funding of \$84.26 transferred to Douglas City School District and Hayfork Valley Union School District pro rata, with 13 students and 41 students respectively.⁹

The school reopened again in 1935¹⁰ after being rebuilt and replaced with a building “constructed entirely of logs” in 1934 as a WPA project.¹¹ Later there’s a notation in historical school records that the district was officially suspended in 1942 and remained so until the 1947-48 school year. However, the very next school year the school

¹ “Trinity County Schools Growing With California”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition.

² *Ibid.*

³ “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 14, 1903.

⁴ “Districts, Clerks, Teachers, Trinity County, 1904-1905”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.

⁵ “Blanchard Flat” (a timeline), Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

⁶ “Blanchard Flat, Burnt Ranch and Don Juan”, Trinity County Historical Society; “Schools are opening”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 27, 1917.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 29.

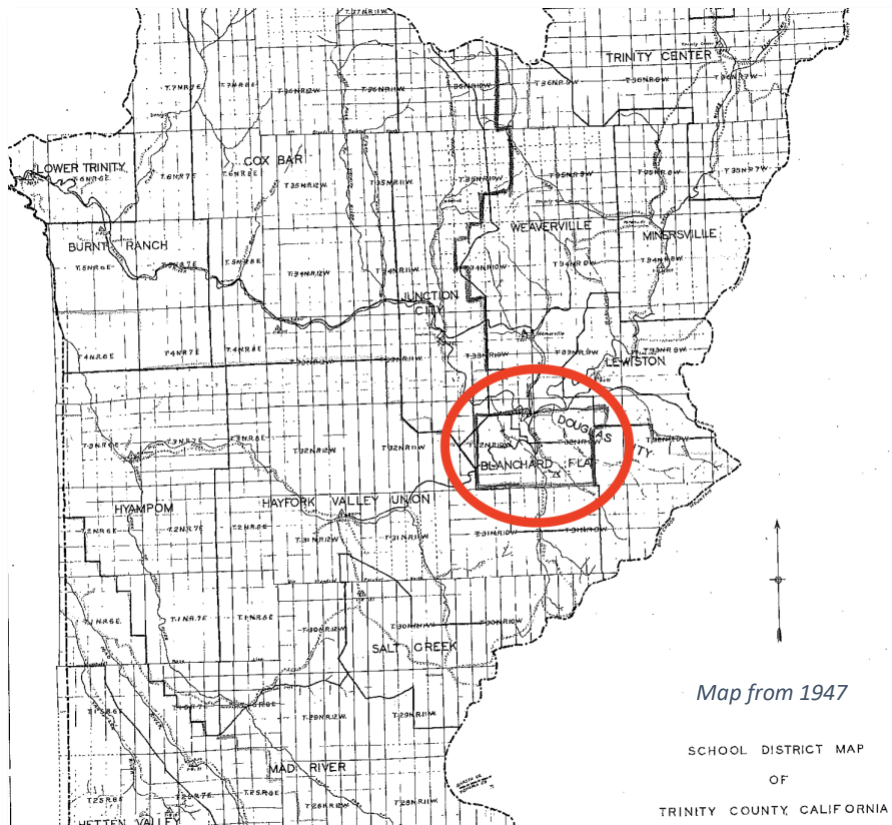
⁹ *School District Disbursements & Receipts*, Douglas City District information, Trinity County Office of Education.

¹⁰ Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 30, 32.

¹¹ “Trinity County Schools Growing With California”, Printed in the *Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition.

district was listed as “active” having been reestablished on July 1, 1948.¹² It’s possible that the school was shuttered for a couple of years before the suspension. The local paper indicated that Blanchard Flat School had reopened “for the first time in seven years” in 1948 due largely to an increase in student enrollment throughout the county.¹³ Eventually, the school closed its doors for the last time in 1959.¹⁴

A community project purchased and relocated the old school (pictured) to Hayfork in 1974, serving the community for several decades. After years of neglect, a Trinity County Historical Society restoration team attempted to restore the old building, but the old walls had deteriorated to sawdust.¹⁵ It was demolished around 2015.



¹² “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1942- 1948, 2.

¹³ “County Grade Schools Enrollment is Record”, *The Trinity Journal*, September 16, 1948.

¹⁴ Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 33.

¹⁵ *Trinity County Historical Society*, <https://www.facebook.com/Trinity-County-Historical-Society-168849509807735/photos/a.4750876258271681/4750876588271648>. Accessed October 25, 2022.