

## Canon City School District/Canon Creek and Dedrick Schools

“Cañón” is a Spanish word describing a narrow watercourse in the mountains or a valley cut in rock by a river, and it is felt that this was the origin of the name of this early community in Trinity County. Canon City was established in 1851, and by 1852 had a population of 800. It was located about seven miles from Junction City on Canon Creek at an elevation of 2,142 feet, and only a mile from the Dedrick Lookout.<sup>1</sup> A post office was established there in 1856.<sup>2</sup> Now considered a ghost town, it once had a blacksmith shop, two stores, two hotels, one bakery, two saloons, two sawmills, a post office, among other businesses, and a one-room School. In 1891 most of the town moved upstream to Dedrick because of new strikes of gold.<sup>3</sup>

It’s not exactly clear when this school district began. “Canon City” School District shows up in the 1866 school apportionments (the list of funding) even though there were only six students enrolled. Six students would have been the absolute minimum number of children needed for state public school funding.<sup>4</sup> “Canyon City” School District is present in the February 1867 apportionments.<sup>5</sup> Since the spelling of “Cañón” has often been converted to “Canyon” in English, we have to assume this is referring to the same district. The district does not show up in 1868 – 1874 apportionments, likely due to too few students to warrant funding, but in 1875 we see “Canon Creek” School District reappear.<sup>6</sup> This is likely why Canon City School District was mistakenly said to have opened sometime during the 1875-76 school year by one source.<sup>7</sup> That is consistent with the report in the local paper that the Board of Supervisors “created” the district in May of 1874 and described the boundary of this new district as the following:

...it is hereby ordered that all that portion of Trinity County lying, above the “Steps” and drained by Canon Creek be and the same is hereby created as a School District, to be known as Canon City School District.<sup>8</sup>

In April 1878, the local paper reported that “Miss Sara Furgeson [sic], who has been teaching at Trinity Center during the winter, returned to Canon City and will resume charge of the school at that place”.<sup>9</sup>

Skipping ahead some years, Mary Flower was the teacher for the fall term of 1887. The school closed for the winter on November 18 of that year. At the time there were 13 students enrolled from six different families: the Bergers, Burgers, Dannenbrinks, Griffiths, and Smiths, and also included two of the Flowers’ children, Hattie and Will.<sup>10</sup>



Canon Creek School building, c. 1856-1905

<sup>1</sup> *Western Mining History*, [https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/california/canon\\_city\\_ca/](https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/california/canon_city_ca/). Accessed February 4, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> *History and Happenings*, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/2012/11/23/canon-city-canyon-city.html>. Accessed June 26, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> *Western Mining History*, <https://westernmininghistory.com>, accessed January 21, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> “School Fund”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 6, 1866.

<sup>5</sup> “State School Fund Apportionments”, *The Trinity Journal*, February 16, 1867.

<sup>6</sup> “School Money”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 1, 1875, January 29, 1876,

<sup>7</sup> Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 25.

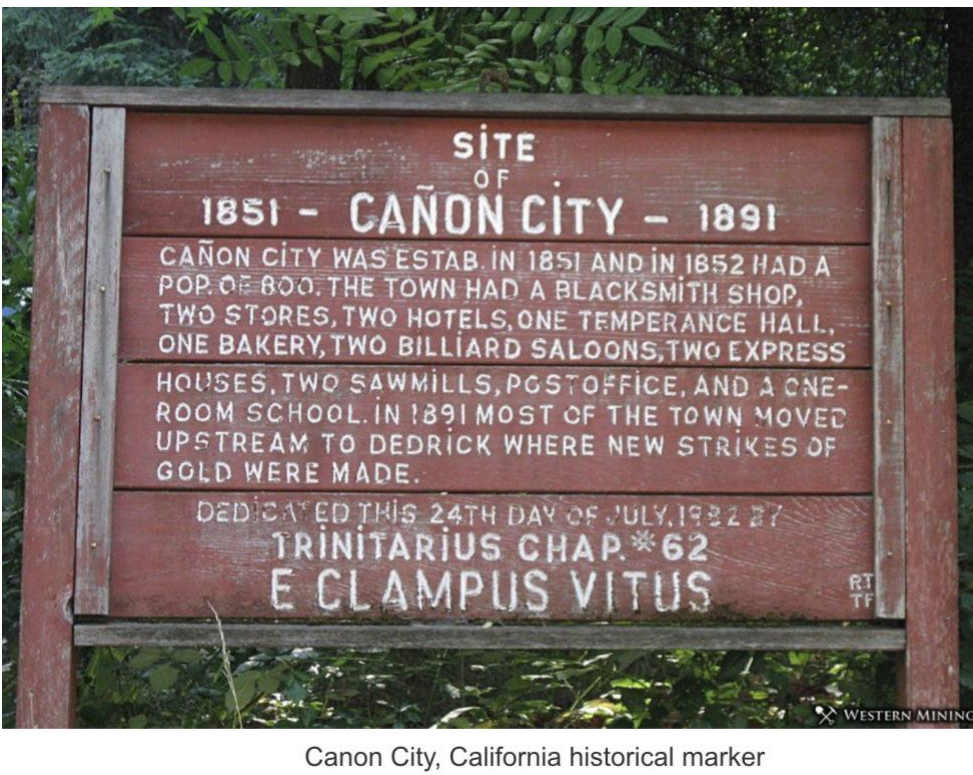
<sup>8</sup> “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, May 9, 1874.

<sup>9</sup> “Home News”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 20, 1878.

<sup>10</sup> Flowers, Mary, “School Report”, *The Trinity Journal*, December 3, 1887.

It looks as though Annie Fox, younger sister to Lizzie Fox (County Superintendent of Schools from 1895-1906) was the teacher in the winter of 1891 and the spring of 1892, given that she received payments of \$260 twice (once in December and once in July) which averages \$65 per month for eight months of work – the going rate at the time.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, the Globe Consolidated Mining Company opened the Globe Mine in 1890 in Dedrick, very near Canon City. A great deal of money was spent shipping in 200 tons of machinery and hiring over a hundred men to work the mine.<sup>12</sup> By 1891, most of the town of Canon City had moved upstream to Dedrick where a post office was established. The school district likely moved as well (see the photo of the Dedrick plaque below), or it might have been split between the two school locations for a time (Canon City and Dedrick). The mine was bonded to a Canadian company. That organization spent so much money upfront to transport expensive equipment from the railroad 80 miles away in Redding, that it was forced to shut down in 1918, failing to make a last payment to the original owners.<sup>13</sup> This was a significant blow to the continuation of the school.

In November of 1893, Miss Rebecca Harvey, teacher at Canon Creek, closed the winter term of the 1893-94 school year.<sup>14</sup> In the 1895 school visit records at the Trinity County Office of Education, the school was referred to as “Canon Creek (Dedrick)”. Agnes O’Neil was the teacher at the school as of August 17, 1895. She was paid \$70 per month to teach nine students.<sup>15</sup> Miss O’Neil was still teaching in September of 1896<sup>16</sup>, when a dance was held at the school, likely as a fund-raiser because the public school apportionments had dried up for this school that year because of too few students attending. It was reported that a large delegation from Junction City and Dedrick had attended the dance with “first-class” music by “Mr. Fish and Zine Shook”.<sup>17</sup>



Canon City, California historical marker

Canon Creek School District was officially suspended by the Board of Supervisors on August 24, 1896, for two years. The Board did not completely lapse (close) the district, because they assumed that the mining operation “[gave] every assurance of permanency”. The Board believed that more miners coming to work in the area meant that more children would require schooling. Canon’s *public* school suspension explains why a *private* school began at Canon City in 1898. During that time, donations to the school totaled \$206 to maintain a seven-month school term. Fortunately, the expenses were exactly the amount of the proceeds donated. The costs of schooling at that time were as

follows: Teacher’s salary \$101.75; Teacher’s Board \$94; Incidental expenses \$10.25. Total \$206.<sup>18</sup>

In 1898, an article in the local paper said that Miss Ada V. Mosley of Oroville “came up” to open a private school on Canon Creek and that the school was funded by subscription. It also noted that “by holding a private school

<sup>11</sup> *Warrant Records*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

<sup>12</sup> “Mine Tunnel Pierces Globe Mountain”, *The Sacramento Bee*, October 15, 1912, 7.

<sup>13</sup> “Another Great Gold Mine Shuts Down in Trinity”, *Bakersfield Morning Echo*, August 18, 1918, 8.

<sup>14</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 11, 1893.

<sup>15</sup> Fox, Lizzie, “Our Public Schools”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 17, 1895.

<sup>16</sup> “Canon Creek Snap Shots”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 4, 1896.

<sup>17</sup> “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity journal*, September 9, 1896.

<sup>18</sup> Fox, Lizzie H., “Canon Creek School District”, *The Trinity Journal*, September 2, 1899.

this year the district will be entitled to public school money next year”.<sup>19</sup> This would only be true if there were the right number of students to receive public funding. Enrollment must have increased because a brief mention in the paper a year later said that “Miss Ida Mosley of Oroville arrived on Friday of last week [April 28 of 1899] and went out to Canon Creek, where she will teach the spring term of the *public* school.”<sup>20</sup> The school did indeed receive public funding in 1900.<sup>21</sup>

In the fall of 1903, Miss Flora Woodbury was teaching at Canon Creek.<sup>22</sup> In 1904, it was reported that the teacher there was Miss Nellie J. Scott.<sup>23</sup> In 1905, the School was visited by the County Superintendent of Schools, Lizzie Fox, in November. Mrs. Frances S. Angus was the teacher at that time and while there were 14 students enrolled, only 7 students were present at the time of the visit.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1905 school visiting records, the school was referred to as “Canon Creek (Canon City)” but there was also a note that year about 14 students enrolled “[in] (Dedrick and Canon City)” as though it was the total enrollment of two schools, one located in Dedrick and the other in Canon City. This could very well be possible with both under the same district name of Canon Creek School District.



Dedrick, California 1904

Nellie M. Jordan, County Superintendent of Schools (1907-1910, visited the Canon School on November 10, 1908. At that time Daisy M. Garoutte was the teacher making \$75 per month. She had been teaching

only six students for the previous 12 months. The student’s order and attention were rated as “good” and so were the “methods and zeal of the teacher”.<sup>25</sup> Although there is no evidence of a school *district* by the name of “Dedrick” in any official school records, there is a mention in the local paper that the “Dedrick School District” (which must have been the Canon Creek School District misnamed) was suspended in July of 1909 by Nellie Jordan, likely due to too few students once again.<sup>26</sup>

The closure of the school was likely precipitated by the mine slowly going bust and the town’s population, including the children, leaving the area. The school district lapsed in July of 1912. The paper reported the Supervisors’ decision to lapse this way:

The Canon Creek School District having been heretofore suspended, and it now [is] appearing to the Board that there is no reasonable chance to re-establish the said school district, it is therefore by the Board ordered that the said school district be ... lapsed...it is further ordered that all of that portion of the said lapsed district, comprising the entire Canon Creek School District is hereby attached to the Junction City School District, forming a part of, and to be known as the Junction City School District and the boundaries of the said district are ordered so

<sup>19</sup> *The Trinity journal*, August 20, 1898.

<sup>20</sup> *The Trinity journal*, May 6, 1899.

<sup>21</sup> “Apportionment of School Money”, *The Trinity Journal*, June 2, 1900.

<sup>22</sup> “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 7, 1903.

<sup>23</sup> “Districts, Clerks, Teachers, Trinity County, 1904-1905”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.

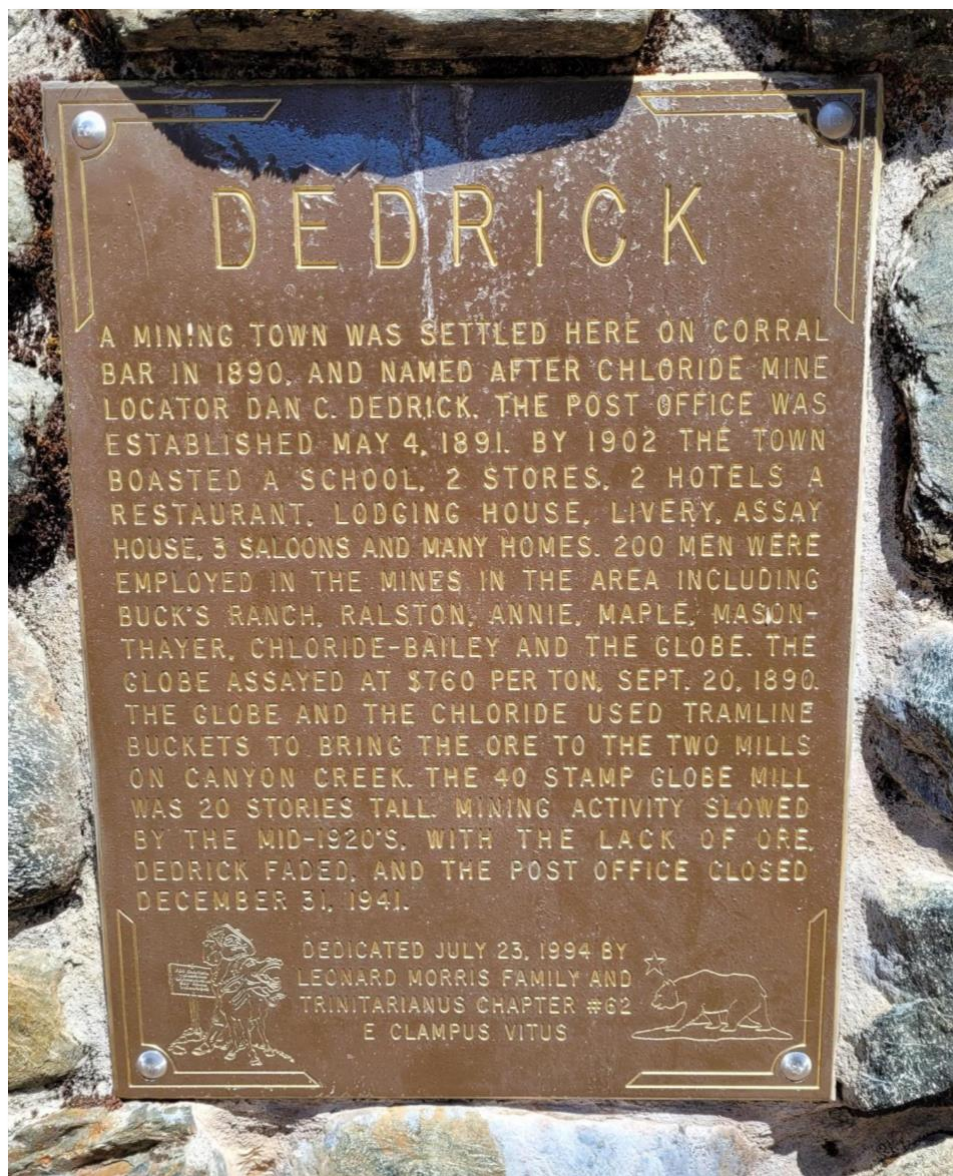
<sup>24</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education

<sup>25</sup> *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 89 and 116.

<sup>26</sup> “School Districts Suspended”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 24, 1909.

amended, and are hereby so amended that the same shall embrace all that portion of what was known as the Canon City School District and the Junction City School District... And it was further ordered that Supervisor Meckel, acting for the Board of Supervisors, sell or cause to be sold, the school houses in what was known as the Canon Creek School District, and the proceeds thereof to be paid into the school fund of the Junction School District. And that all of the personal property of said district be transferred to, and become a part of the Junction City School District.<sup>27</sup>

Given that the above quote mentioned school *houses* (plural) and that the lapsation was to comprise “the *entire* Canon Creek School District”<sup>28</sup>, it appears that indeed the Dedrick School was separate but also a part of the Canon School District, and so the territory encompassing two schools and two schoolhouses was emphasized as becoming part of Junction City School District.



<sup>27</sup> "Supervisors' Proceedings", *The Trinity Journal*, July 7, 1912.

<sup>28</sup> *The Trinity Journal*, July 13, 1912.