

Hetten Valley School District

According to one source, Hetten Valley School was in operation in 1876 along with 14 other school districts in the county.¹ This information, however, does not hold true in the historic records at the Trinity County Office of Education which show Hetten Valley School 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 Duzen River.² 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 as a public school. 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.³

An election notice regarding a bond for \$600 to purchase a lot and build a schoolhouse for the new Hetten School District was in the local paper in June of 1915.⁴ In the end, a tax was levied on each \$100 of assessed property value for the benefit of the Hetten School District.⁵

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".⁶

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

² "A Short History of the Schools of Trinity County", Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956. 5.

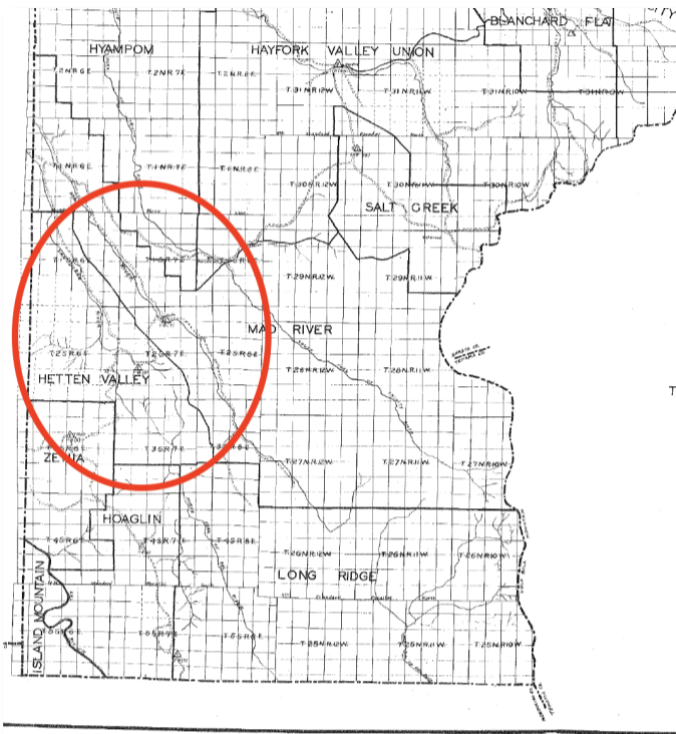
³ "Minutes of Board of Supervisors", *The Trinity Journal*, November 11, 1914.

⁴ "Election Notice for District School Bonds", *The Trinity Journal*, June 15, 1915.

⁵ "County Rate Remains at \$2.50", *The Trinity Journal*, September 11, 1915.

⁶ *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



Hetten Valley School District is indicated in this 1947 district map

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 the visit indicated that the school building was “fair”.⁷

By April of 1918, the teacher was Mrs. H. A. Deering who opened the school on the 1st for the spring term. It was mentioned in the local paper that Hetten Valley was still “Trinity’s newest district.”⁸

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.⁹ Miss Shuford went on to teach the next year at the Grass Valley School District.¹⁰

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.”¹¹ However, the school was operating again a year later and continued at least into the 1950s.¹²

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”

⁷ Ibid., 577.

⁸ “In the Local Field”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 1, 1918.

⁹ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 37.

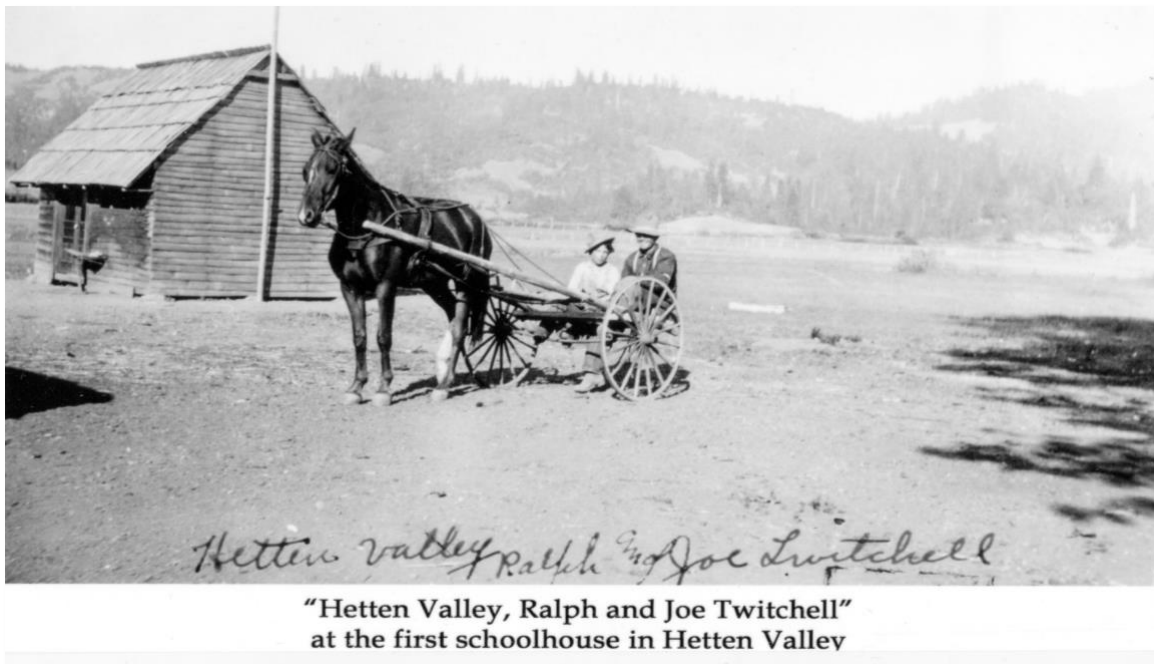
¹⁰ Ibid., 59.

¹¹ “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 13.

¹² *Annual Reports of the Conditions of the Public Schools of in the County of Trinity*, Historical Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

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.¹³

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”.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ Given that these were not the best circumstances for learning, it is not a surprise that the teacher’s



Hetten Valley School, First Schoolhouse 1915

“Methods and Zeal” was listed only as “Fair” and the students were receiving an F in all subject areas at that time.

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.¹⁶

¹³ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 103.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁶ “School District Disbursements & Receipts”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

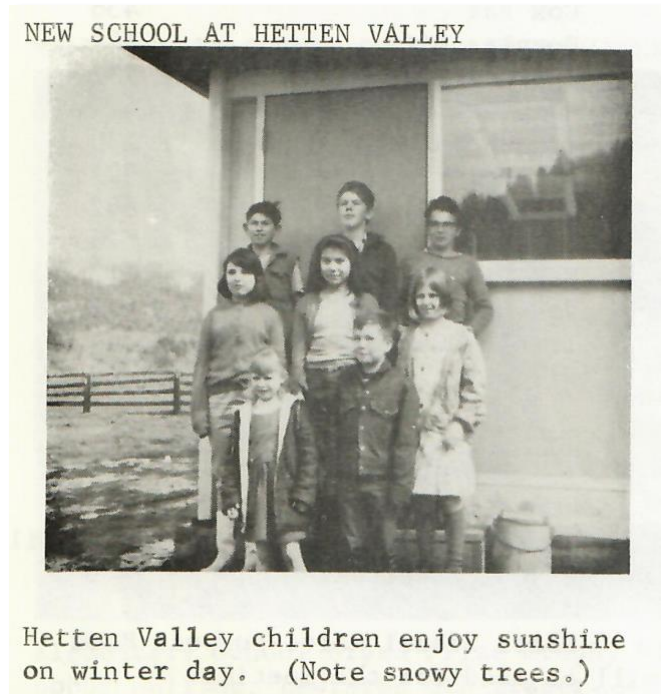
Things began looking up as evidenced by the records of a school visit in July of 1925. A new schoolhouse had been built. Hettie S. Lowden had continued as the teacher and was making \$140 per month. The “Methods and Zeal of the Teacher” was listed as “good” along with the student's progress in all subject areas.¹⁷

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 Kelley Willburn.¹⁸

In 1943 the schoolhouse was said to have burned and a new building was constructed.¹⁹

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,²⁰ 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.²¹ 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.

¹⁷ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 191.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 267, 316, and 368.

¹⁹ "A Short History of the Schools of Trinity County, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956, 5.

²⁰ "New School at Hetten Valley", County Superintendent of Schools Newsletter, May, 1966, 6.

²¹ 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

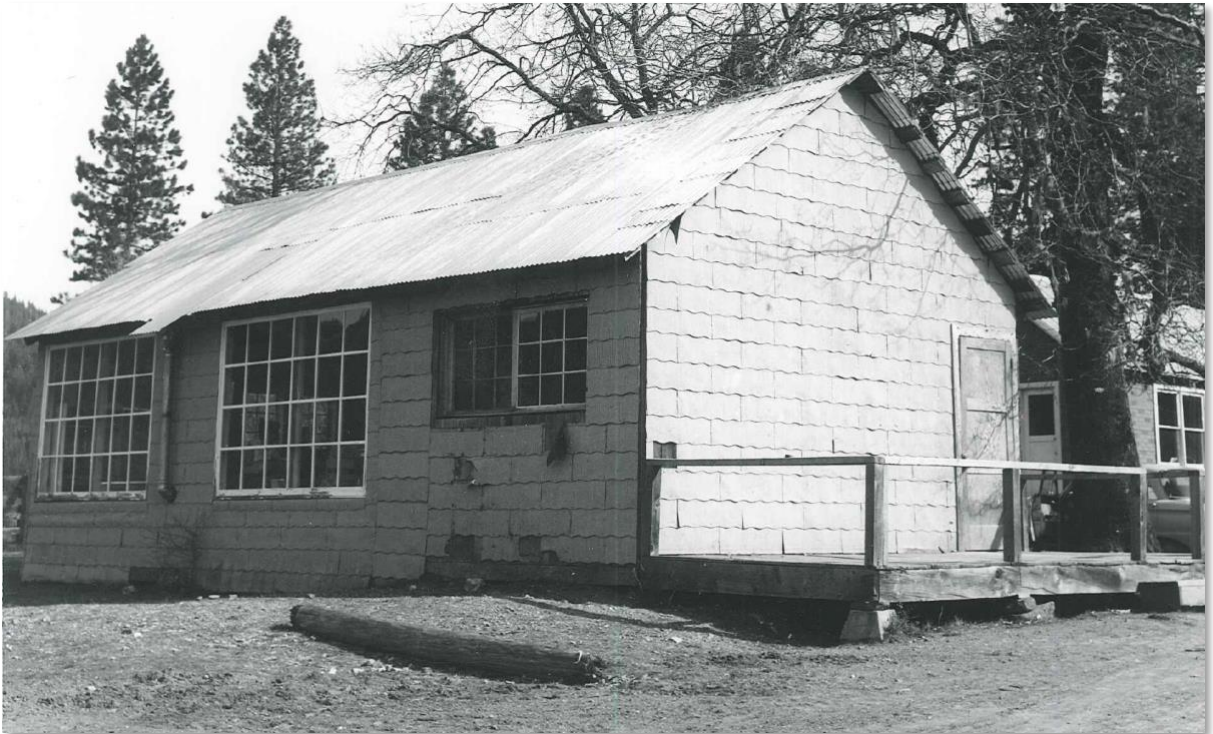


Photo of the old Hetten Valley Schoolhouse, taken in 1967, shows signs of deterioration