

Lake Mountain School District

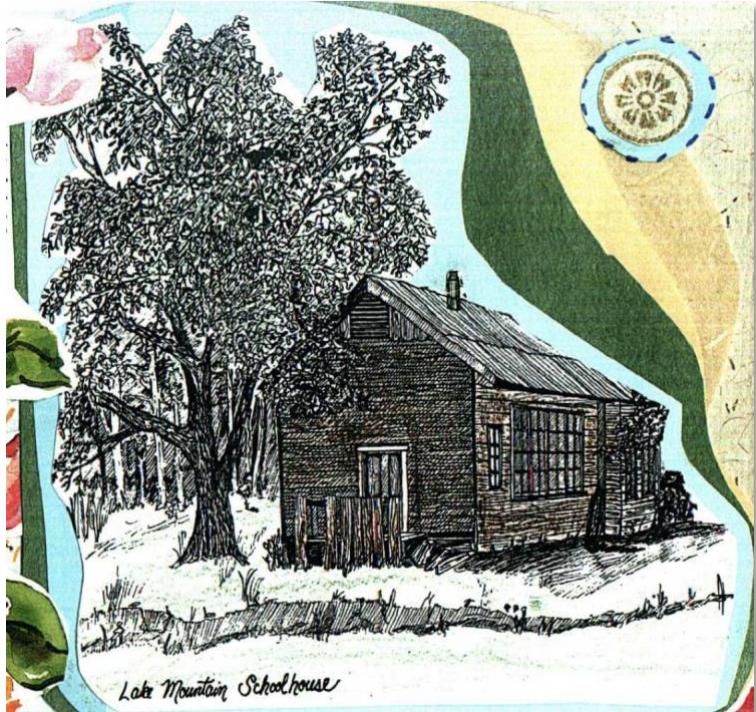
The town of Lake Mountain was located 14 miles south of Hoaglin and about 20 miles north of Covelo, likely in Wailaki ancestral territory. The name was derived from the Lake Mountain Ranch. Strangely, the post office was originally established there in April of 1878, but was discontinued just a month 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.¹

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 shingles. 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.²

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 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.³

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".⁴ 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



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.

¹ History and Happenings, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/?currentPage=3>, Accessed June 26, 2021.

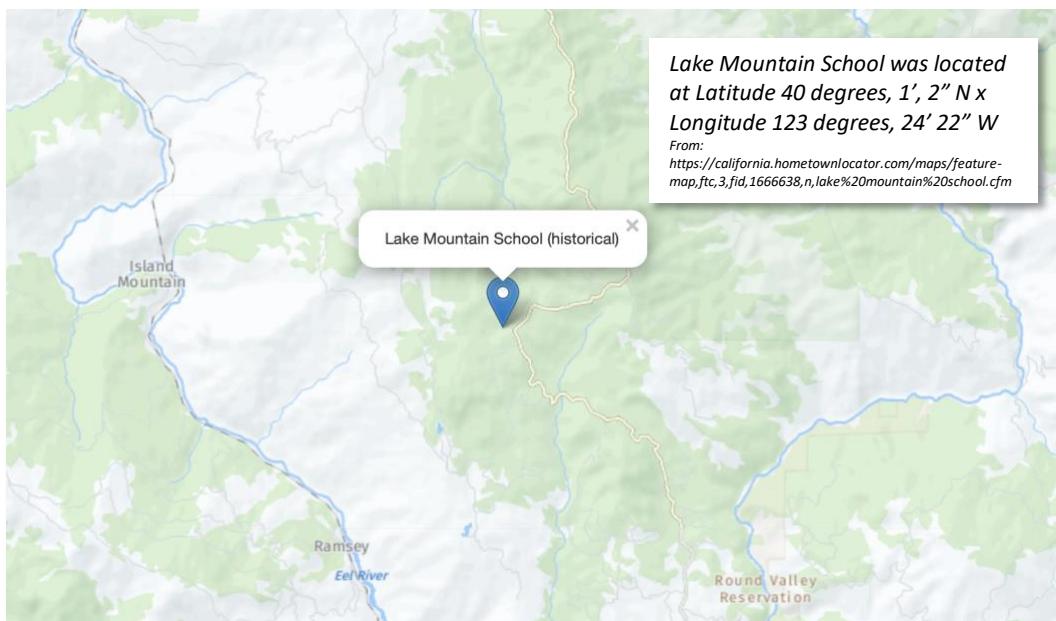
² "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County: A Project by the Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School", 2008.

³ 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. Accessed June, 15, 2022. 104.

⁴ School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 248.

didn't actually move into the new schoolhouse until 1929.⁵ 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.⁶



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".⁷
- 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.⁸
- 3) Lois Hall said she began teaching at the Lake Mountain School "south of the Lone Pine Ranch on Lake Mountain Road".⁹
- 4) In 1948 Wm. Travis McCullock 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.¹⁰

⁵ 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, 2017. Accessed June 15, 2022. 156.

⁶ Ibid., 156-157.

⁷ "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School" 2008.

⁸ 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. Accessed June 15, 2022. 156-157.

⁹ "One Room Schoolhouses in Southern Trinity County, A Project By Hoaglin Zenia Elementary School" 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid.



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

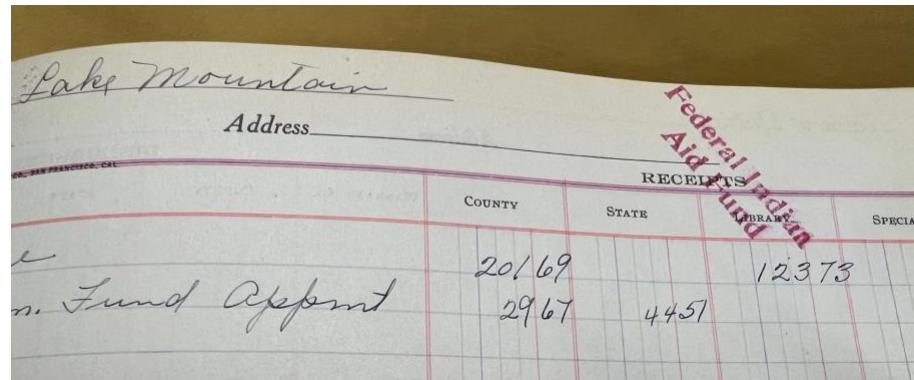
School District doesn't show up at all in the directories of school districts during the 1939-40 school year and it was noted in an annual report as being suspended. This continued to be the status during the next school year until the 1941-1942 school year when it lapsed (closed). However, the school reemerged in the 1946-47 school year as Lake Mountain School under the oversight of the Hoaglin-Zenia School District.¹¹

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.

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 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



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

¹¹ Official Directories, Warrant and Disbursement Records and A Record of School Visits, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

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



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.