

Southern Trinity High School

While taxes were being paid by all residents of the county to support the historic Trinity County High School, which had attendance centers in both Weaverville and Hayfork, the parents of high school-age students in Southern Trinity had to find room and board for their children in either the Fortuna, Eureka or Weaverville communities in order for them to attend high school. This was usually accomplished at a family's own expense. While families could apply for some assistance from the Trinity High School District, the amount received was not equal to the full cost of travel, room, and board.¹

By the winter of 1969, the idea of establishing a high school in the Southern Trinity area was being discussed by community members in the Mad River/Dinsmore/Ruth area, the Mad River Elementary School District, and the County Superintendent, Robert Gravette. The discussion moved to the Trinity County High School Board of Trustees where the issue most debated seemed to be whether to create a two-year or a four-year high school and, of course, how it would be funded. It was decided that even though an elementary school district could provide a ninth-grade class, it was better to create a two-year high school attendance center as a satellite of the Trinity County High School located in Weaverville.²

Many different names were proposed for the school such as Sixth Rivers High School, Mad River High School, and Van Duzen High School. In the end, on May 27, 1969, the Governing Board of the Trinity County Joint Union High School District in Weaverville gave their final approval for the establishment of a 9th and 10th-grade attendance center in the Van Duzen area of Southern Trinity, to be known as Southern Trinity High School.

The Board of Trustees for the County High School District agreed that it would rent classrooms for the Southern Trinity attendance center from the Mad River Joint School District. [Note that a "joint" district refers to one that encompasses two counties.] The Mad River Joint School District agreed to purchase two relocatable buildings for this purpose, which would be placed on the Van Duzen Elementary School site. One building was to have a folding partition in it so that it could either be used for two smaller classrooms or as one large room. Each building would consist of three modules. Each module was to measure 10' x 32'. A business to provide the buildings was identified and a contract was signed with the county superintendent representing the Mad River Joint School District as their negotiating agent. Originally the buildings were to be delivered and installed by mid-August 1969. However, work on the foundations did not even begin until the last week of August. With school to be open on September 2nd, plans were quickly made to utilize some of the rooms at the Van Duzen Elementary School itself. The elementary teachers gave up their lounge. In addition, the library and the multipurpose room were also adapted and together they made three classrooms for the high school.³ The high school was opened with twenty-two students and three teachers, seven students more than what had been expected during the planning stages.⁴

¹ Smith, Donald W., "The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School", California State University, Chico, 1975, 22.

² Ibid., 24-27.

³ Ibid., 36-37; and "Trinity County School Bulletin", Trinity County Office of Education, June 1969, front page.

⁴ Smith, Donald W., "The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School", California State University, Chico, 1975, 19.

About two weeks after school opened for the year, six trucks with low-bed trailers arrived carrying the new buildings. A crane also arrived to unload and set up the buildings on the foundations that had been poured three weeks prior. At that point, the buildings had to be bolted together, seams had to be sealed, the floor tiled, the roofs sealed, electrical connections made, and chalkboards installed. Trinity High School finally moved home at the end of October

On April 17, 1969, Mr. Campbell High School District Superintendent, sent out a seeking teachers who would be "pioneering" a new high school, of the County High School, "in a location". They received five but proceeded to advertise again and June 12. On June 27, 1969, Smith was selected as the principal/teacher and he other teachers, Marelyn Johnson had about a month to the following things:

1. To develop a schedule of
2. To write a faculty and a student handbook
3. To determine the and to write the courses
4. To order school supplies equipment
5. To prepare for day
6. To find suitable housing two teachers⁷

Thankfully, at least some of the was obtained from Hayfork High been equipment that was surplus or was not being used graciously offered by the that school. The Mad River Joint District also pitched in and furniture. The County Office provided items as well. Even Lewiston Elementary provided some cafeteria tables on loan.⁸



The Vinnell Corporation building containing the two classrooms for the social studies and math and science programs.



View of the student locker room which was constructed between the two Vinnell Corporation building.

The Southern into its new 1969.⁵

P. Minor,

notice interested in independent beautiful applications on April 25 Donald W.

selected two [no spelling Donald Smith accomplish

classes handbook

curriculum of study and

registration

for the other

equipment School. It had considered and was principal of School offered

⁵ Smith, Donald W., "The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School", California State University, Chico, 1975, 37.

⁶ Ibid., 30.

⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁸ Ibid., 56-57.

Mr. Wagner, teacher, resigned at the end of the first year and was replaced by Ronald A. Garlick from Chico. Garlick was assigned to one of the homes at the Ruth School site. He was unsatisfied with the home he was assigned and when he was unable to convince the district to purchase a mobile home for him and his family, he was released from his contract before school even started. Two weeks before school was to open, Carol Lingo was employed in his stead.⁹

The new high school was given full interim accreditation during the 1972-73 school year so on May 31, 1973, ten seniors graduated from the new school, the first graduating class of Southern Trinity High School. The following year a fully accredited program was offered. In 1973 the high school became a four-year school with seven teachers, 69 students, and seven classrooms.¹⁰

The people of the Mad River, Dinsmore (in Humboldt County), and Ruth communities eventually attempted to gain some control of high school affairs so they elected a member of the Trinity County High School board from their area. They also petitioned to establish trustee areas on the board ensuring that they would always have one trustee representing their area. Not satisfied with this, and feeling that they were having to fight for everything they obtained from the High School Board of Trustees, they decided they wanted to form their own district completely separate from the county-wide high school district. The State Board of Education gave its approval to form a new unified district on September 12, 1974.¹¹

The County Committee on School District Organization met to consider several different plans for the possible unification of all the schools in Southern Trinity, including the new high school. There were many hearings, much debate, and two elections to determine the outcome of the unification proposal. Finally, as of July 1, 1976, a new unified school district was formed in the Southern part of Trinity County to incorporate all of the existing schools including the high school, Mad River Joint School District, and the Hoaglin-Zenia Union Elementary District.¹²

⁹ Ibid., 31-32.

¹⁰ Ibid., viii.

¹¹ Smith, Donald W., "The Historical Study of the Organization and Development of Sothern Trinity High School", California State University, Chico, 1975, 68 – 74.

¹² Ibid., 75.



Accrediting Commission For Secondary Schools
1499 BAYSHORE HIGHWAY • BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA 94010 • PHONE (415) 697-7711

June 29, 1973

Mr. Donald W. Smith, Principal
Southern Trinity High School
Star Route, Box 155
Bridgeville, California 95546

Dear Mr. Smith:

We are pleased to announce that the officers of the Accrediting Commission for Secondary Schools have examined the preliminary visitation report submitted by the team which visited your school recently on behalf of this Association and have authorized the granting of an interim term of accreditation. The term of accreditation for Southern Trinity High School is effective as of this date and extends through June 30, 1975.

May we congratulate your Board of Trustees, you and your staff on the educational program which has been developed and on the facilities provided for implementing that program. We trust that you will continue to keep attention carefully focused on the quality of both your process and product.

Sincerely,

J. Wesley Berry
Executive Director

JWB:JJ

CC: Steve C. Searcy, Superintendent,
Trinity County Joint Union High School District
Vern Robinson, Director, Office of Relations
with Schools, UC
n B. Landis, Member,
eliminary Visitation Committee
da Nystrom, Member,
eliminary Visitation Committee

Southern Trinity High School

Mad River, California
Trinity County Joint Union High School District

This Certifies That
Dean Alexander Halvorson
has satisfactorily completed the Course of Study prescribed
for Graduation and is therefore entitled to this

Diploma

Given this 31st day of May, 1973



President, Board of Trustees

Clerk, Board of Trustees

District Superintendent

Principal



The quadrangle between the two sets of buildings.



The north end of the Speed-Space building showing the entrances of the restrooms and the custodial storage room.