



RUSSIAN RIVER RECORDER

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An Official Publication of the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society

School Days Then & Now



In This Issue

As a companion to our current exhibition, "School Days, Then and Now," this issue of the *Russian River Recorder* delves into the educational history of the Healdsburg area. Our journal begins with a newly-researched article about the history of early schools and schooling by Museum staff member (and pioneer descendant) Jane Bonham. Until 1871, the majority of the early school efforts were home-based or private. Museum founder Ed Langhart researched the private Russian River Institute and its subsequent incarnations in 1978. We are also republishing an excellent article written by Dr. Francis Ritz in 1982 about the Healdsburg College, a private Seventh-day Adventist academy that is prominently featured in our current exhibition.

Old timers will especially enjoy Darla Meeker's wonderful interview-based article, "Guilford School Memories," which shares fond one-room school reminiscences of Alexander Valley students from the 1930s. Author John van der Zee presents a biographical valentine to West Side School, which describes the creation of a unified district from a group of obsolete rural schools.

We are delighted to include articles by two new contributors: Carol Peterson and Jeanne Leal Hartlaub, both of whom are current Museum Board members. Carol, Healdsburg High School librarian from 1987-2014, bears witness to changes she observed over time within the library; in her view, "the heart of the school." Jeanne, a nurse and member of St. John the Baptist Church parish, interviewed retired teachers Monica Dunne and Mary Madden. The women shared their stories as former nuns who taught school at St. John's.

In closing, frequent contributor journalist Ann Carranza shares a fascinating profile of current Healdsburg Junior High School Vice Principal, Teacher and Counselor Erika Fremault McGuire.

We hope you find this publication interesting and informative. To learn more, be sure to visit our exhibition, "School Days, Then and Now," on display at the Healdsburg Museum through November 13.

Holly Hoods, Executive Director/Curator
Pamela Vana-Paxhia, Editor



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The Official Publication of the
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Early Schools and Schooling

by Jane Bonham

Education Only for the Wealthy

Homeschooling with private tutors was the mode of education for young children during the periods of Spanish and Mexican rule. There were five such private schools in the county. The only one in a town was that of the Vallejo family, established by General Vallejo a few years after founding the Sonoma pueblo. The well-to-do families of the 1840 land grants followed his model. Captain Stephen Smith established a school at his Rancho Bodega Canada de Jonive (the Analy Ranch at Freestone). Others followed at San Miguel (the Mark West Ranch near Fulton) and the Santa Rosa Ranch.

As late as 1850 [General Vallejo] deeded valuable lands in payment for the tuition." It was said that at Rancho Bodega the teacher received her board and lodging and a salary the year round, for it was not easy to obtain the services of a capable, well-educated woman in what was then virtually a wilderness. It was harder to keep one than to get her, for such women were in great demand as wives for the ranchers.

There were only a few Americans present here, even in the 1830s and '40s, but "a great tide of immigration" began with the gold rush in 1848. This discovery of riches put California on a fast track to statehood, which was accompanied by the Federal and State structural expectations for schooling of their young citizens and of designated roles for their educators. However, bureaucracies move slowly. As communities coalesced and towns grew, educational opportunities also appeared, at least for those families able to pay the fee.

The teachers came as part of the great migration to the state; and as the vast task of forming the new counties into districts, erecting school buildings, and providing support for the system was but in its first stages, yet there were children here to be taught, and parents eager and willing to pay for their teaching, it followed naturally that any man or woman possessing even a fair education and a desire to teach could speedily find a group to teach.

Private day schools and boarding schools were established in Sonoma by 1850, with Petaluma following in 1851. Before 1855, Santa Rosa, Healdsburg and Sebastopol as well as lesser county towns each had at least one or more schools, supported by tuition.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, for example, opened an academy in Sonoma, which advertised: "The male department is under the tuition of Mr. T. A. Tallyrand, A.M., and the female department under the tuition of Miss Mary Doty. The trustees have also entered into an arrangement with Mr. B. B. Berry to have charge of the boarding department; and Mrs. Berry and Miss Doty will have the young ladies under their care while school is not in session. Boarding and lodging will be furnished at \$4.50 per week. Tuition for primary students, per month, \$4; for higher branches, \$5; for languages, \$6."

After accomplishing the basics, children of wealthier citizens were sent away to boarding school. Boys went to colleges around the bay area such as St. Mary's, Santa Clara College, schools in San Jose or Sacramento; some were even groomed in old Eastern establishments. Daughters of the Catholic First Families were sent to convents at Benicia and San Jose.

Statehood Brings Some Standardization

Healdsburg pioneers and settlers played leading roles in bringing quality education to the area. Dr. Benjamin Blackman Bonham was the first regular county superintendent of common (public) schools in 1854. He later became active in the Russian River Institute, serving as agent (manager) and instructor, and was the first resident medical practitioner in the town.

Dr. Bonham and those who followed him in the early days of the public schools system had less authority and fewer duties than later county superintendents of schools. In addition to sending statistical information to the state superintendent, the code defined the duties of the first county superintendents simply: to "aid the various school trustees in the examination of teachers for public

schools, and see that the examination in all cases is sufficiently rigid and thorough.”

Control over all other aspects of the local schools was assigned to the Trustees of local Districts. Individual districts were designated around towns and communities. The law stated that, “Until otherwise determined and established by the proper authorities, each city, and each town or township in this state shall constitute one school district.” In Sonoma County there were eight districts: Analy, Bodega, Mendocino, Petaluma, Russian River, Santa Rosa, Sonoma and Vallejo.

Trustees were elected and had oversight of public schools within their district. Local trustees were responsible for running the schools: conducting examinations of teachers; granting teaching certificates (valid for one year only); fixing the time of service, the fee and defining all expectations of teachers. The code required that “at least one of the trustees shall visit and ascertain the character and progress and prospects of each school, at least once a month.”

There were no qualifications and no examinations conducted for service as a trustee. This was unfortunate in at least one community, rousing the citizens of Calaveras to petition the California Senate in 1874, urging the passage of a law: “...enacting that all persons elected Schools Trustees shall be required to possess at least a common school education, and that, in default of candidates being found possessed of these qualifications, then the County Superintendent shall manage the school business. A law of this character should be enacted to protect the community from aspiring ignorance. No man should hold an office that he is unfit to fill, but it often happens that men seek positions for which they have no qualifications. There should be a guard against the consequences of such mistaken ambition.”

In the early days, the public schools were grammar schools and very few country students took the examination for graduation. There were several practical reasons for this. A three day written examination was required. This was given only in Santa Rosa by members of the county board of education. Many families could not afford the expense of boarding a child in town for several days. Since no standard curriculum was in place, there was no guarantee that the student had been

exposed to an education consistent with the content of the examination. Motivation to accomplish this feat was low since there were few public high schools to attend, even if a student passed the exam.

More Opportunities for Everyone

All that changed when Mrs. Frances McGaughey (“McG.”) Martin became county superintendent of schools in 1886. Frances graduated with honors from Minnesota State Normal, a teachers college, and became a teacher in Minnesota before coming to California. By 1874, she was in Healdsburg, accepted as first assistant, later becoming principal of Healdsburg schools until her marriage in 1876 to Edgar Martin. Widowed in 1882, she returned to education. In 1886, Mrs. Martin was elected as Superintendent of Schools and reelected in 1890 – the first woman elected to the position.



Source: 1897 Sonoma County Atlas

Frances McGaughey Martin

Frances is credited with upgrading the quality of education by bringing consistency to the grammar school course of education. She established a county-wide grammar school examination which was sent out to be conducted by

trustees at the individual schools and then returned to the superintendent's office where it was reviewed by the board of education. Students who passed the exam received a diploma which enabled them to enter high school without further examination. In 1894, Dr. David Starr Jordan stated, "No other superintendent in the state is doing better work... and none is working more intelligently and loyally."



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Henry Randolph Bull

Another Champion for Equal Opportunities

Access to high school education was still limited for public school students. A champion of equal opportunities for continued education arrived in Sonoma County in the late 1880s. Henry Randolph Bull graduated from Columbia College, N.Y., but he didn't decide on a career until after arriving in this area. He continued his studies at that time, including reading law in a Santa Rosa attorney's office. That experience convinced him that what he really wished to do was to teach. First teaching in Healdsburg schools in 1888, beginning in a single-room school, "...by his sterling leadership and great capacity [he] saw the city's school plant grow to ... fine structures both for grammar grades and high school classes." Establishment of the high school in Healdsburg was

credited largely to his efforts. His expertise was recognized beyond the town, in 30 years of service on the County Board of Education, chosen to head the Board in 1920.

"Prof. Bull, by his very kindness of spirit ... inspired in his pupils efforts to learn that no lesser man could have approached. He was successful because he loved his work above all things."

Greater Value in Formal Education

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, a formal education became increasingly valued by parents. Through the efforts of the early pioneers and settlers, children of the townships and cities received the best education available at the time. Notable individuals from Healdsburg were among the talented leadership who brought excellence and equity to our schools.

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Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Russian River Institute

Russian River Institute

by Edwin Langhart

reprinted from *Russian River Recorder*, 1978

Professor Erastus A. Scott arrived in Healdsburg in the summer of 1857. He was an educator and his first thought was the establishment of a school in the new town that had, just that year, been laid out by Harmon Heald. As a result of his encouragement, farmers and businessmen subscribed money, mechanics gave work, the mills furnished timbers, and, under the able direction of Charlie Proctor, a schoolhouse was erected, the first in Healdsburg. (In the surrounding country three schools had been previously built, one near Dry Creek, one on Westside Road, and one near C.L. Lambert's place, further up Dry Creek.)

It was located in a grove of oaks and madrones about a half mile east of Heald's store on a two-acre parcel donated by Jesse Seaman and Rod Matheson. The building was a two story square structure with a belfry housing the first school bell. By the close of the year it was completed and the bell rang in the new year of 1858.



Jesse Seaman



Source: Healdsburg Museum
Rod Matheson

On January 23rd a grand concert and festival took place in the new school, known as the Russian River Institute. Two days later school opened with 103 students in attendance.

Prof. Scott was assisted by Miss E. A. Downing and in March Rod Matheson was engaged

as a teacher. This was a private school, depending on tuition and contributions for support. There were plenty of pupils, but very little income, for most of the students had received scholarships for assistance given by parents of the students in the building of the institute. The patronage was mostly local, although two registered from San Francisco, one from Petaluma and one from Santa Rosa. At the close of the third term in 1859 the property passed out of the hands of Prof. Scott.

The building and premises were taken over by a group of local citizens, of whom the leaders were: Rod Matheson, R. M. Deneen, W. M. Macey, John D. Hassett and C. E. Hutton. It was then re-opened with Charles Hutton as principal and was known as the "Agricultural and Mechanical University of California" and at least some of the students paid for their education by working on the Matheson farm which was used for training in agriculture. Since that time the street fronting the school has been called University Street.

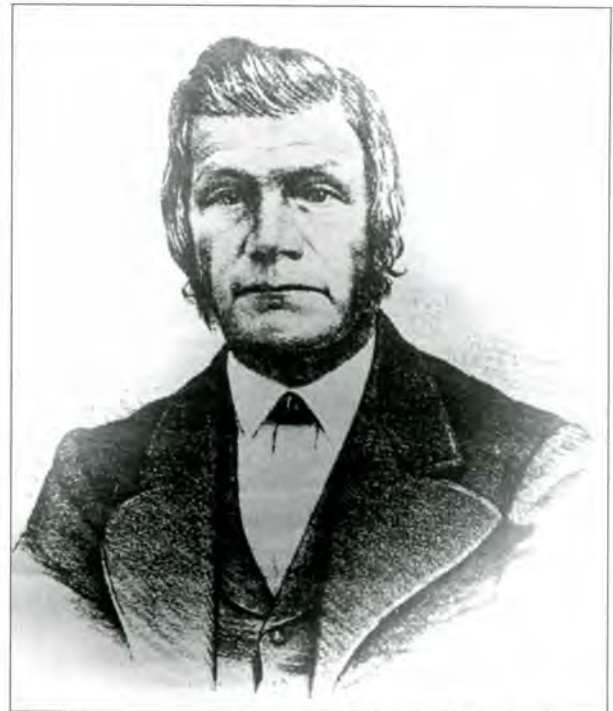
In 1861, after being closed for a brief time, it was opened under the management of Rev. J. W. Stump and J. A. Burlingame. It was closed again in the fall of that year, and re-opened in the spring of 1863 by Prof. J. W. Anderson, under the name "Sotoyome Institute." It continued under this name until the close of 1867.

Prof. Anderson made quite a success of the school. He established a literary society and installed a library of 300 volumes. Some of these books were later taken over by the Citizen's Library of Healdsburg. Instructors at the Institute during this period included Miss Mary Duncan, J. J. Maxwell, C. F. McGlashan, C. A. Menefee, Miss Hattie Dudley and Miss Mattie Clark.

Upon the closing of the Institute the property fell into the hands of Cyrus Alexander, who conveyed it by deed to the Presbyterian Church. Thereafter it was known as the "Alexander Academy." In 1872 the Misses Stone opened a school in the Academy which they conducted for a year or so.

In 1875, Mrs. H. E. McCullough opened a school in the Academy. She was assisted by Misses Cora Blackington and Luella Wolcott. In 1877 Dr. S. H. Thomson assumed charge of the school. His faculty was his own family, R. Heber, Henrietta and

S. May Thomson. The growth of the school was slow.



Source: 1877 Sonoma County Atlas

Cyrus Alexander

In the fall of 1877, the new Healdsburg Institute (located where Plaza Court is now) was completed, to which Dr. Thomson removed his students in 1878. So the poor old pioneer schoolhouse was deserted. All during its existence it had to compete with the free public school over on Tucker Street between Fitch and East Streets. Now all about it modern homes were springing up and the old school building became a ghost house for bats and birds. The old bell rang no more, except by some truant boy, who climbed the rickety belfry stairs. No traces of the former school are evident today at 112 University Street.

In 1882, it was written "yellow-hammers have taken possession of the Alexander Academy, the bell is gone, the curtains in shreds, paint off the house and pickets off the fence and altogether it is not a credit to the community." In 1886, Mr. Gates, a deacon of the Presbyterian Church, purchased the old building and lot for taxes due, tore down the schoolhouse and then subdivided the grounds, selling the lots for residential building.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Healdsburg College

Healdsburg College: 1882 – 1908

by Dr. Francis Ritz

reprinted from *Russian River Recorder*, 1982

Since the day when D. T. Bordeau and J.N. Loughborough had arrived in San Francisco and began their work with tent meetings in Petaluma, California, August 13, 1868, the organized work of the Seventh Day Adventist church had grown rapidly. Meetings were held in Windsor, Piner, Santa Rosa, Healdsburg and then spread to Oakland, Napa, Woodland, Sacramento, Yountville, St. Helena and many other places.

To keep the young people from leaving the Church, and to train workers needed for further expansion of the Church, and to teach the high principles held by the organization, proper schooling was a must.

The 10th annual session of the California Conference of Seventh Day Adventists met at East Park Grove Campground on the American River near Sacramento. Ninety-five family tents and several large tents were pitched. At this meeting a group of workers met and decided that the trip back to Battle Creek was too far to send their youth.

Battle Creek College was the Church's first denominational college. They needed a college on the West Coast. A vote was taken and \$2,000 set aside for preliminary expenses. Mrs. E.G. White, who along with her husband, James White, pioneered the Adventist movement and was believed by Church members to receive prophetic visions to help in the establishment and guidance of the Church, urged the establishment of a western school.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Ellen (E.G.) White (seated center, holding book) at a camp meeting in Reno, 1888.

A sub-committee to secure a favorable site and a committee to search for a suitable faculty was set in motion. It was voted to secure Sidney Brownsberger, former president of Battle Creek College, and an intelligent, energetic 36-year-old graduate of Michigan University, to head the faculty. William C. White, son of Mrs. E.G. White and president of the newly-elected school board, went to Cheboygan, Michigan, and convinced the Brownsbergers that California needed them.

Locating a site for the new school was a bit more difficult. The search was directed mostly where California Adventism was established. Sites in Napa, St. Helena, Santa Rosa, Petaluma and Healdsburg were considered.

Near the last of January, 1882, the quarterly conference meeting was held in Healdsburg, where the first Adventist Church west of the Rockies was established in 1869. Mrs. E.G. White was again present and urged the members to establish a school in the west. Local Church members recommended their own town! Property could be obtained cheaply, the climate was good, crops were certain, and the people were prosperous.

The Healdsburg Institute on Fitch Street, built in 1877, had failed financially. The property was valued at \$10,000. Mrs. Mercy Gray had purchased the property for a proposed Baptist College, which had never materialized. On March 6, 1882, it was sold for \$21.81 in delinquent taxes. Mrs. Gray redeemed it in the required time and on April 5, 1882, sold it to W.C. White (acting for the school board) for \$3,750 in gold coin.

The "Signs of the Times," Adventist weekly paper, reported: "The building is new and well arranged with one hundred school seats in it."

Elder Brownsberger, concerned about getting people to send their young people to the school wrote in "Signs of the Times," "This school is not only for children. We want laborers in the cause of God, and our experience in the East has taught us that the very best means of fitting young men and women for laborers in the gospel...is to have them attend our school."

The *Russian River Flag* commented: "This would not be a proselytizing school, but it is to be conducted in such a manner as to attract all young gentlemen and ladies who desire a more advanced education."

The Healdsburg Academy offered school on April 11, 1882, with Prof. Brownsberger leading the students in singing, "Home Sweet Home." The spring term opened with an enrollment of 26. The following week it had increased to 31. Students of all ages, from five years up attended.

"The doors of the academy will be open to all those who respect wholesome discipline and who will submit themselves to good regulation...There will be no...special study of Bible history...and religion for students whose parents...wish them excused," wrote Brownsberger in the local paper.

Expenses for basic courses including Grammar, Science, Biblical, and Classical Studies were \$22.00 per month. The cost of "extras" which included instrumental music, French, bookkeeping, vocal music and penmanship was \$10.00 per month.

During a school board meeting in May, 1882, it was decided to change the name of Healdsburg Academy to Healdsburg College. The citizens of Healdsburg expressed themselves as favoring "College."

Brownsberger is described as being "of medium size, spritely step, brown hair, sparkling eyes." He was not one to delay putting his new program into operation. On Monday morning the matron led her girls to the laundry and for the first time for some of them, put them to work. W.C. White encountered the normally dignified Brownsberger in the yard busy with wheelbarrow and shovel. After being told of the girls working in the laundry, he said, "We have made a beginning...The labor by students is not despised."

The first full term began July 29, 1882. By the end of the year, the addition of Mrs. W.C. Grainger, Edith Donaldson, and the C.C. Ramseys brought the faculty to 6 with a total of 152 students.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
"North Hall" Healdsburg College Dormitory, 1900

By this time Mrs. E.G. White had purchased a two-and-a-half-acre property on Powell Avenue at the north end of Johnson Street (this house is still there). She and Prof. Brownsberger pressed for a school home (dormitory). Five acres of land near the school was purchased for \$1,300. Mary Scott, a friend of Mrs. White, wanted to help in the education of boys and girls. She gave one-half of the money needed to build the first school home in an Adventist institution. "North Hall" as it was called was ready when college opened, July 25, 1883. It was an impressive four story building, 38 x 100 ft., with accommodations for 70 persons. It was on the northeast corner of Fitch and Grant Streets where the Junior High School is now located.

The need for girls to have a higher education was felt in the 1880's. It is interesting to note that the first graduate from the College was Kate Bottomes in 1889. She graduated from the normal course (teaching).



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Water fight at the Healdsburg College Broom Factory, 1900

Shop buildings were built in the orchard surrounding the school home. By 1884, shoemaking, tent making and blacksmithing were available. Students cared for the cows and horses; girls cared for the kitchen under Mrs. Clement and worked in the laundry and dining room. Each student was required to spend 2-1/2 hours a day in work. The McClures taught an excellent course in tailoring and dressmaking. The school had 200 students by 1884.

In 1884, a lot was secured just south of the College (South Hall), and by 1886, a large church was constructed. In its high day, it had about 500

members. It provided for the church needs of the students and the members of the Healdsburg area.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Seventh-day Adventist Church on Fitch Street, 1880s.

Prof. W.C. Grainger took over the leadership of the school in the summer of 1886. It is agreed that old Healdsburg College glory days were during his administration, 1886 – 1894.

William Grainger came west from his native Missouri when a grasshopper plague hit the district where he was teaching. He taught first in Ukiah and in Anderson Valley (Boonville). A neighbor, Abram La Rue, gave him Adventist literature and he soon joined the Church. At a Yountville camp meeting, Grainger responded to the pleading of Mrs. E.G. White to come and teach at the new school.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Student dormitory room, 1900.

There were 13 teachers and 223 students in Prof. Grainger's first full year as president of the College. There was a profit of \$3,590 which was most encouraging. From then on things went downhill financially for the school.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Student lounge, North Hall, 1900.

President Grainger was a tall, dark, Lincoln-like man in appearance. Unruffled, unhurried, he always had time to give a visitor his full attention. An old injury caused him to limp (“Step-and-a-half Grainger” was a name some students used behind his back). He felt strongly that there would be a place in denominational work for trained women, and he regretted that more girls were not in school. Loved dearly by students and townspeople alike, President Grainger and wife sailed in 1896 to Japan as the Adventist Church pioneer missionaries there. He died suddenly in 1899 and was buried in Tokyo.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
Printing press at Healdsburg College, 1900.

“One cannot realize or appreciate what an excellent institution is located in our midst until they visit the students’ home. Certainly the entertainment and pleasure derived justifies the

expenditure of half a day or so in viewing the interior of this splendid structure and its delightful surroundings.” (From a small part of an article written by “Mignonette” of the *Russian River Flag*, 1892.)

The new president was Frank Howe, a handsome young graduate of the University of Michigan. Because of the Panic of 1893, a current bicycle craze, an epidemic of grippe, the enrollment of the college dropped to 65 students. The morale of the student body was low. Somewhat bitter over finances and some criticism by parents, faculty, and students, President Howe resigned in the middle of the year, 1897.

The keys of the school were handed over to Elder R.S. Owen, the respected Bible teacher. President Owen was not an administrator and grieved over the finances of the school.

In 1899, Marion E. Cady arrived on campus. Under President Cady, Healdsburg College enjoyed a revival and maybe is said to have experienced the second “great period.” Cady was likeable, eloquent, aggressive, full of ideas, and willing to meet and talk to people. Even though President Cady introduced many programs to make the college finances balance, by 1900 the college debt had risen to \$40,000. \$20,000 was pledged at camp meetings and Mrs. E.G. White wrote a book, “Christ Object Lessons,” the proceeds of its sale were to go to support the college. In 1903, Cady was replaced by Elton D. Sharpe (1903-1904), and finally Dr. Lucas A. Reed (1906-1908).

In a very frank report published in the *Pacific Union Recorder* in 1905, President Howell blamed the situation largely on unwise borrowing for expanding industries, some not essential to the college. The College had as many as 20 industries working to support the school. In 1906, the name of the school was changed to Pacific Union College.

After the college building was leased to the Healdsburg School District trustees in 1906, the students of the college met in the school home (North Hall). The last college activity was a teacher’s institute held June 16th to July 14th, 1908.

Many of the faculty, students, and especially the “spirit” of old Healdsburg College were transferred to Angwin, Napa County. The P.U.C. is still proud of the high principles begun so long ago in Healdsburg and is still educating youth.



Source: "A Proposed Reorganization of the School System of Sonoma County" by William Baker, 1916
Guilford School, before 1916

Guilford School Memories, circa 1932

by Darla Meeker

reprinted from Russian River Recorder, Spring, 1994

"No matter how far removed, even amid the wildest and most rugged mountains, there will be found the school house." – History of Sonoma County, 1880

Guilford School was one of 25 one- and two-room schoolhouses that once dotted the outlying hills and valleys of the Healdsburg area. Erected sometime before 1870, it was first located at 5720 Red Winery Road, where it also served as a Sunday School until 1896, when the Alexander Valley Church was built.

In 1900, plans were made to move Guilford School to a site alongside Gird Creek, where Highway 128 makes a 90-degree right angle turn, intersected on the west by Wasson Lane. At the time the straight stretch of road from the Alexander Valley Store to the turn was known as Beeson Lane.

Many Guilford School students, as well as one of its teachers, still live in Alexander Valley, or in the town of Healdsburg. Their combined recollections of typical school-day activities more than likely mirror similar experiences of those

students who attended other Healdsburg area schoolhouses of the same era, which bore such familiar names as Pine Ridge, Lambert, Felta and Sotoyome. Although Guilford School was demolished, its legacy as an independent school district in the Healdsburg area lives on in the memories of its former grade-school pupils.

Entering Guilford

"My family moved to the Guilford School District from the Sotoyome District in 1928," recalls Ruby Osborn Wasson, whose mother, Reta Frellson Osborn, attended the original Guilford School between 1894 and 1900, when it was located on Red Winery Road. "I was 8 years old, in the third grade, and very unhappy about having to change schools."

For Albertina (Nina) Zanzi, her first day as a first-grader at Guilford was awesome and exciting.

Citing the eight years she spent at Guilford as the "most memorable of my life," Nina recounts the events that led up to that special first day of school. "In my preschool years, I had floated through a carefree Land of Oz in my Dutch-style coveralls. Then, suddenly, my mother was sewing little blue and white and pink frocks. And my father bought me a lunch pail. Armed with a few phrases of English that I'd gleaned from my older brother, I, too, in time, was able to string together whole sentences."

The School Building

Unlike most of the one-room schoolhouses in the outlying Healdsburg area, Guilford boasted two rooms. Because of their different architectural styles, Ruby Wasson believes that they were built at different times.

"The older room was like most of the one-room schools in the county," she says. "It had a very high ceiling, windows on one side, two doors in front that opened out onto a porch and into two anterooms. The anterooms were at the front of the building. They were small rooms where we hung our coats and sweaters and left our lunch pails. One anteroom also had the rope from the bell in it."

The bell itself was located outside above the anteroom in the belfry. It was rung at 9:00 a.m., to summon the students to class, and then again after each recess and, once again, after lunch.

Another Guilford alumnus, Robert Young, recalls that the only time the school bell didn't ring as expected was the morning after Halloween. "I don't remember that we did any trick-or-treating," he recounts, "but we would walk out around the Valley and by the school. We'd climb up in the bell tower and tie the bell so it couldn't be rung the next day to call us all to class."

While the older students, fifth through eighth grades, attended class in the older room of Guilford School, the younger children, first through fourth grades, spent their school day in the second, newer room. This room, according to Ruby Wasson had a lower ceiling, wider and lower windows, and lower blackboards.

A long, narrow corridor, which was used for storage, connected the two classrooms. There was also a back porch and two rest rooms, as well as a well-stocked library and a first aid area.

One of the "glowing" features that was found in both rooms, and mentioned by both Ruby Wasson and Nina Zanzi, was the standard wood stove, with a circular metal shield surrounding it. "It was supposed to circulate the heat," remarks Ruby, "but we all sat around it on cold days and 'kept the stove warm' instead."

She also remembers that the wooden schoolroom floors were impregnated with oil, which, if you fell on them, left "an oil stain on your clothes forever."

A Typical School Day

"Days at Guilford School started with the 'Pledge of Allegiance'," according to Dorothy Ackerman Ruonavaara, who, along with her brother Eldon, attended Guilford School. After a patriotic song was sung, the students, who were lined up in rows in front of the school's main steps, filed into their respective classrooms.

Nina Zanzi remembers that one of her teachers, Mrs. Georgianna Norton, "revved up" her students by asking them to report on a brief newspaper article or to tell a good joke. She also fondly recalls "my little desk with its iron-scroll design and blond, hardwood surface. Now and then," she muses, "I meet one in some antique shop where it stands in patient dignity, holding a potted plant."

Befitting the times, Guilford School provided its students with a broad curriculum: History, Geography, Arithmetic and Mathematics, Physical Education, Grammar, Penmanship, Arts & Crafts, Literature and Music. "Music was supplied monthly by a district teacher who traveled from school to school," reports Dorothy Ruonavaara. "The one I recall most vividly was Mrs. Close, a very proper and exacting lady. One day, as she was demonstrating in song what she wanted us to learn, we heard an additional howl from Fido, who was waiting outside the door. Although we tried to suppress our giggles, it was embarrassing for our teacher."

Shirley Osborn, who entered Guilford in the fifth grade when his family transferred from Sotoyome District, mentions that "Kick the Can," "Annie-Over" and marbles, in season, were among the recess and lunchtime games favored by Guilford students. He also notes that "Guilford had a tennis

court and a basketball court that we hadn't had before at Sotoyome."

Built by Guilford parents, the asphalt tennis court was used on weekends as well as during school. This early start on tennis, Dorothy Ruonavaara believes, was the basis of a strong tennis team when Guilford students entered Healdsburg High School upon completion of the 8th grade.

Meanwhile, after a rousing lunch-time game of tennis, softball or basketball, Guilford students returned to their classrooms to rest their heads on their desks as they listened to their teachers read aloud the continuing episodes of the current story or poem, with Longfellow, Stevenson, and London being well-represented during this peaceful and relaxing interlude of an otherwise full and busy school day.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Guilford Elementary School, 1936

Fourth (back) row: Dario Zanzi, Wallace St. Clair; Third row: Buck Holley, Lorraine Fradenburg, Olga Cavallo, Mabel Eachus (teacher), Elva Fradenburg, Margaret St. Clair; Second row: John Lawson, Donna Lee Vanoni, Billy Foote, Samuel Squibb, Leroy Still, Delbert Kron; First row: Ronald Kron, Georgine Penry, Norma Cavallo, Marjorie Bennett, Wilbur Peavler, Jr.

A typical Guilford school day, which began at 9:00 a.m. for the entire student body, ended at 2:00 p.m. for first- and second-graders. Third- and fourth-graders were dismissed at 3:00 p.m., while the four upper grades remained in school until 4:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. But, on Fridays, according to Ruby Wasson, they got out at 3:00 p.m.

While both Ruby and her brother, Shirley, remember hearing how their mother walked along

the fence railings to get to school when the ground was wet and muddy, they usually rode their bikes to school and home again, as did many of their classmates.

"On the way home we often stopped and played in Gird Creek," says Robert Young. "It had a lot of beautiful trout, so we'd bring along a burlap bag or two, prop open the end with boughs, and then chase the fish into what looked like good hiding places, but which were really our bags. We caught quite a few that way."

Guilford boys and girls alike also played basketball with Geyserville Grammar School, according to Shirley Osborn, as well as baseball with Alexander, Lytton and Maacama schools, during after-school hours.

Elma Goodman, who taught at Guilford, still remembers the time she piled her pupils into the back of a flatboard truck with sideboards, and traveled to Grant School, which is located south of Healdsburg near Foppiano Winery, for their very first volleyball game. "Back then you didn't think about insurance," she says with a laugh. "And we were nervy enough to say that we'd come back again for another game."

Along with Elma Goodman and Georgianna Norton, there were several other teachers that are remembered fondly by Guilford students: Mabel Eachus, Lois Neugent, Gladys Wasson Smith and Vivian Wasson.

Guilford's Christmas Plays

"Christmas was the big time of the year," according to Nina Zanzi, "when the entire student body became a Hollywood production company...creating the set, the decorations, making the costumes (with the help of moms), rehearsing the cast for the 'Opening Night' presentation for the selected play to family and friends."

Looking back, Nina wonders who was most nervous on Opening Night: the pupils or the parents. Whatever the case may have been, she adds that "the evening was always received with great enthusiasm."

Ruby Wasson also enjoyed these Christmas programs, and particularly remembers a play called "The Sleeping Beauty," which Mrs. Georgianna Norton directed. The cast included Elizabeth Norton as the Sleeping Princess; Lloyd Patterson as

Prince Charming; Ruby's brother, Myrl Osborn, as Blue Beard (who borrowed a sword from friends to look the part); Shirley Osborn as an animal trainer; and Max Smith as the "trained bear." "I was Cinderella," Ruby recalls, "and I got to wear a beautiful dress. And Nina Zanzi was my 'Fairy Godmother.'"

Louis Wasson, who served as one of three Guilford school board trustees for fifteen years, played the part of Santa Claus for many years at this annual event.

Play Day/End of School Activities

Play Day was held once a year in the spring at one of the following participating schools: Alexander, Maacama, Rogers, Lytton and Guilford.

According to Dorothy Ruonavaara, Guilford students studied wildflowers in preparation for the annual "Play Day" wildflower contest. There were also games, skits, and a picnic lunch to look forward to.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Guilford Elementary School, after 1936

Back row, standing: Charlie Hoyt, John Lawson, Lorraine Fradenburg, Mavis Davies (teacher), Donna Lee Vanoni, Wallace St. Clair, Wayne Wood, Gene Williams; Front row, seated: Billy Foote, Betty Pedrotti, June Caldwell, Dolly Wilson, Norma Cavallo, Samuel Squibb

One year, Ruby Wasson remembers that several Guilford students performed a dance entitled, "Tip-Toe Through the Tulips" for both the May Day celebration at Geyserville and at a Play Day presentation. "Two girls were dressed as Dutch children," she reminisces. "The boys were green leaves and several other girls were the tulips. We wore green skirts and colored petals up around our faces. Mine were red."

Throughout the school year, Guilford parents were very active, and held a P.T.A. meeting once a month in the evenings, at the schoolhouse. "After the meeting, our parents played cards," Shirley Osborn remembers. "In bad weather, the kids played in the other room and in good weather we usually played hide and seek outside. We always liked P.T.A. nights."

On the last day of school before summer vacation, there was a baseball game between the fathers and the students at Guilford School. The mothers provided lemonade and, sometimes, ice cream.

There were three students in Dorothy Ruonavaara's eighth grade graduating class. "The time at Guilford School," she says, "was a good basis for future schooling and establishing lifetime friends."

Even Ruby Wasson, who as a third-grader, was "very unhappy" about moving to Guilford, now looks back on all of the fun times she had there. In fact, she married one of the boys she went to school with at Guilford: Fred Wasson.

In 1949, the Guilford, Alexander, and Maacama districts consolidated their efforts to form the Alexander Valley Unified School District. At the time of unification, two Guilford alumni, Robert Young and Fred Wasson, were school board trustees for their grade-school alma mater.

Elizabeth Norton Marchand, whose mother, Georgianna Norton, was one of Guilford's teachers as well as its principal for four years, sums up the way Guilford students felt about their school. "We all loved it," she says, "and enjoyed our time there very much. It was just home."

Contributors:

Elma Goodman
 Dick Hafner
 Fritz Kennedy
 Elizabeth Marchand
 Shirley Osborn
 Lorraine Kimes Owen
 Dorothy Ruonavaara
 Mr. and Mrs. Jim Voss
 Ruby Wasson
 Robert Young
 Albertina (Nina) Zanzi

West Side: The Biography of a School

by John van der Zee

reprinted from *Russian River Recorder*, Winter, 2006

On November 27, 1951, neighbors of five classic one-room Sonoma County rural schools voted, in effect, to put those schools out of business.

The schools, Daniels, Felta, Junction, Lafayette and Mill Creek, had served families on the western side of the Russian River honorably and well since the early years of the century. Now changing times, including demands for expanded resources and greater efficiency, required a new approach: consolidation.

While it was recognized that the whole area would benefit from a combined operation (one of the schools had shrunk to an enrollment of five students), there was also concern that the localized quality of the schools, with their high degree of individual attention, parental participation and community support, might be lost.

In a transition from neighborhood schoolhouses to a school district, students were assigned by grade to the different country schools, while planning and construction of a new unified school got underway.

A Site Rich in Local Legend

The new school site, a prune orchard at the confluence of Felta Creek and Mill Creek, about a baseball throw away from the old Felta School, dripped the sauce of local legend. The creeks were spawning streams for steelhead and Coho salmon, and Native Americans had fished and camped along them for generations. Felta Miller, an early settler, homesteaded his ranch about a mile up Felta Creek, and the green barn at the end of the county road that passed the school site was generally accepted as the original mill that Mill Creek was named for. It is believed to date from the Mexican era. Harmon Heald, a hand who worked in the mill, opened a store at a nearby crossroads, and began the town of Healdsburg. J.G. Mothorn, who founded Mill Stone Valley Ranch, on which the barn still stands, had portions of his property landscaped by his friend, Luther Burbank. Some of Burbank's plantings,

which included guavas, loquats, grafted plums, and a lily tree, survive unto the present day.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Felta School faculty and students, 1916

Mothorn's son used basalt stones from a cobblestone quarry on the Mothorn ranch to build the foundation of Felta School. The school, while under construction, survived the 1906 earthquake.

Though West Side School would be new, it rested on a deep and solid base of local tradition.

Farm Kids, Farm Traditions

In the winter of 1956-57, all eighty-five West Side students were gathered under one roof at the new West Side Union Elementary School, summoned by the transplanted bell from the old Felta School. "It was a rural atmosphere," recalls Tim Harrington, who attended West Side during this era, sent ten children of his own to West Side, and has served on the district board for more than twenty years, "Kids were farmers. Board members were farmers. They used to close school so kids could work the prune harvest."

In a carryover from the one-room country school era, there was considerable individual attention. "Our principal, George Peabody, noticed that some of the boys liked to go down to the creek, fool around, and smoke. He bought one of those big

carnival cigars and offered it to boys who thought smoking was a good thing. It served its purpose.”

The principal’s job was demanding. In addition to teaching and serving as principal, West Side’s boss was also superintendent of schools, dealing with maintenance, transportation, budget, a board, the state, parents, kids, everything. Keeping administrators in the job long enough to plan and implement changes proved challenging. In its first 33 years of operation, West Side Elementary had 12 superintendent/principals. Parental participation and community support were crucial to providing continuity.

“It looks like a loved place.”

The setting of the school, nestled among redwoods and orchards in a valley fed by spawning streams, helped encourage a deep awareness of the natural world among students, faculty and staff. “It looks like a loved place,” recalls Gay Kenny, who spent 24 years, six of them as principal/superintendent, at West Side, “a rewarding place to be.” The setting and the attitude helped attract unusually dedicated teachers and made learning vivid among students. West Side’s quality of life and education began to attract interest, and transfers, from outside the district.

Student population had hovered around 100 children for years, but by the late 1970s, the makeup of the surrounding community had begun to change. The prune orchards were gone, replaced by ever-expanding ranks of vineyards. Exurban families, many of them versed in new disciplines—computer technology, medical research, scientific viticulture—had moved to the West Side area, and were seeking to combine country school nurturing and unity with nature and a quality education for their children. Interest in, and support for an expanded educational experience came with them.

Science, Gardening, Music, Cooking, Art

There had always been a garden of some kind at West Side. Now, under Nancy Foulk, an annual gardening program was begun, with students preparing soil, planting seeds, raising and harvesting vegetables and flowers (it’s much more encouraging to eat veggies when you grow them.) An annual Science Fair gave West Side students a chance to develop and display their involvement with

scientific methodology. Sparked by grants from the California Arts Council, the school was able to offer enhanced instruction from Artist-in-Residence Marcia Connell and musician Mary Drew, plus dramatic productions mounted by Eileen Williams. Performers from the Bay Area gave students live experience of professional poetry, theatre, music and dance. Through technology grants, the school was able to place computers, printers, modems and trained staff into upper-level classrooms. The expanded education was not so much a departure from traditional small-school education as an extension of it. Parents, some of them food preparation professionals, would come into the classroom and teach the children how to cook. Elizabeth Schmidt, who managed the kitchen at the nearby Bishop’s Ranch, showed a classroom of kids how to make root beer from sassafras.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Three new classrooms completed in 1958

Expanding the School to Match the Education

To house the increased variety and participation of a West Side education (a portable classroom had been added in 1973), a unique multi-purpose room was added to the school building under superintendent/principal Terry Kneisler in 1982. A folding-wall system allows for division into between one and four spaces, and one wall can be opened onto the school courtyard. The room, named Felta Hall, serves as lunchroom, kitchen, play facility, computer classroom, theatre and community hall, and its exterior architecture, with its half-round arches, echoes the design of the old Felta School, which had become a pre-school and day-care center. The new Hall also offered an ideal gathering place for the Monthly Assemblies, which bring students, faculty and staff together for individual recognition as well as art and cultural

contact. The Assemblies, which have hosted guest musicians from the Healdsburg Jazz Festivals, plays, artists and dance groups, have become a West Side tradition. To help raise funds to support these programs, activities were added that quickly became annual events, the Jogathon, where students and student teams pledged laps in exchange for donations, and the Spaghetti Dinner, which grew into an Annual Auction. There was a conscious effort to maintain the school's individual character by expanding upon it.

Growing While Staying Small

To meet the changing needs of modern education, special ed, a growing Latino community, reduced class size, applications for admission from outside the district, West Side administrators and board agreed to increase the student population while maintaining the school's intimate, personalized learning experience. "We wanted to hit 155," recalls Richard Bugarske, who became superintendent/principal in 1990, "figuring that was a good number until you got higher. We didn't do much recruiting, though we may have put ads in the paper. It was mostly word of mouth." In three years, the school grew by forty students. Out-of-district transfers grew so significantly that eventually a lottery was instituted for kindergarten.

"There was an effort to connect with the whole community," says Bugarske. "We wanted to be inclusive. We included food in celebrations. Families felt comfortable that we were looking out for their children. That if the school bus broke down, their kids would be given rides home. The family atmosphere was very strong..."

State and National Recognition

An awareness of what was happening at West Side—a community of parents and the school devoted to providing special instruction for students—began to spread beyond the immediate area. In 1993, West Side was named a California Distinguished School. That same year, the school also received honorable mention for a National Blue Ribbon Award. "We didn't win," says Bugarske, "because we didn't qualify as a statistically significant school—not large enough."

The physical plant continued to expand, gradually, like the enrollment of the school. In

1982, two more portable classrooms were installed, and in 1997, a separate kindergarten with its own bathroom. A new water tank was added, and a work space/storage room.

With help of the California Conservation Corps, a nature path was built down to the creek, now a federally protected stream, and the subject of continuing study by the Department of Fish and Game. The Corps and local Eagle Scouts provided tools and person power, West Side food, shelter and a plan. The path is refurbished annually.

With completion of Warm Springs Dam, and the opening of a fish hatchery at Lake Sonoma, student and teacher interest in fish ecology increased. A trout planting program where steelhead, raised from eggs are planted by third-graders in Mill Creek, was developed by Nancy Foulk and Rhonda Bellmer and has become an annual feature of the school. By now, it is certain that some of the full-grown steelhead returning to the creek are West Side alums.

The annual garden became an organic garden, with Lisa Phipps as gardening consultant, overseen by a garden committee composed of teachers and staff members. A donated building was added and remodeled into a greenhouse the following year.

The annual Sixth Grade Campout evolved into an overnight on the classic sailing ship *Balclutha* in San Francisco, where students stand watch, sing chanteys, and eat sailor food.

And in a continuation of West Side's musical tradition, a school band was formed in 2004.

Initial planning for a new wing to the school, replacing the temporary classrooms, got underway in 2004.

A Neighborhood School and More

Despite the increased recognition and expanded programs, the school remained faithful to its roots. A quota of district children must be reached before students from outside the district can be admitted. Students are accepted in a straightforward manner, whatever their abilities or disabilities are. As the community became more affluent, with both parents not having to work, there could be a greater commitment to children's schooling. West Side has never had busing to and

from the town of Healdsburg: parents must commit to providing out-of-district transportation. Fund-raising, which had expanded through events like the Auction, acquired full legal and fiduciary oversight with the forming of the Felta Education Foundation in 2003, in support of the school.

Continuity of management had long ceased to be a problem. Terry Kneisler had served as superintendent/principal for seven years; David Levine was at West Side for three, Richard Burgarske for ten years, and Gay Kenny for six. Mrs. Kenny was succeeded in 2005 by Assistant Principal Rhonda Bellmer, a ten-year veteran of West Side.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
West Side School kiosk, 2016

Appearances and Reality

The physical plant and setting of a school can be unreliable guides to the quality of education offered.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection
West Side School building, 2016

Since the days when Socrates taught in the Athenian agora, outstanding education has occurred in ghettos, monasteries, barracks, even prisons.

Stories of bucolic prep schools that turn out to be nightmares for students have become a cliché.

Yet at West Side, the surroundings are a true manifestation of the inner character of the school. The fact that the property is as well kept and carefully modified as any private home from the era, surrounded by generations of roses, testifies to fifty years of devoted care and maintenance, backed by community support and parent volunteerism. The presence of Felta School, still a subject for photographers and landscape artists a century after its opening, remains a powerful reminder of West Side's small-school roots. The proximity and variety of the natural world that brings students not just the words, but the music of a meaningful and effective educational start in life, remind us that there are teachers at West Side who do so in preference to opportunities to teach elsewhere. And the rows of cars and clusters of parents waiting to deliver or pick up their kids demonstrates daily the continuing reality of West Side's high degree of parental commitment and support.

At West Side School, as with few other places in life, appearances reveal reality.

"It's a place you can sink your teeth into and feel you're doing something," says Gay Kenny. "If there are kids who need help, you feel like you can do something without stretching things too much."

"It's a wonderful place to be."

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Gay Kenny

Richard Bugarske

Bob Lownes, Sr.

Bob Lownes, Jr.

Maggie Ross

Elizabeth Schmidt



Source: Mary Madden

The Order of the Infant Jesus, 1965

Two Nuns' Stories

by Jeanne Leal Hartlaub

On July 21, 2016, Mary Madden and Monica Dunne agreed to be interviewed regarding their teaching careers as Catholic nuns at Healdsburg's St. John the Baptist Catholic School. Both are now retired from teaching and are no longer Catholic nuns. Mary and Monica continue to reside in Healdsburg in the same neighborhood where the original St. John's Convent was located. Healdsburg became home because of the "love of the people of the Healdsburg community." There is history here for both Mary and Monica.

In 1950, Archbishop Mitty of the San Francisco Archdiocese wanted to establish a Catholic school in Healdsburg. The archbishop noted there were not enough nuns to staff all the parochial schools in San Francisco. Certainly there were no teaching nuns available for Healdsburg. Father Mark Hurley (later Bishop Hurley of Santa Rosa) spoke to Archbishop Mitty regarding the possibility of traveling to Ireland to contact a missionary order of nuns there. Father Hurley was related to the Superior, Mother Anthony Coleman, of the order of Sisters of the Infant Jesus.

The order of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus was a French order of nuns which also had a headquarters in Ireland. The Irish headquarters had a novitiate for training and educating women who aspired to the religious life. After the intervention from Father Hurley, Archbishop Mitty received a promise from Mother Jean Desmet of the Sisters of Infant Jesus in France, that the order's Irish branch would staff Healdsburg's St. John the Baptist School.

In 1950, Sister Anne, Sister Helen, Sister Thomas Aquinas, Sister Regis and Sister Fintan

came from Drishane Convent in Cork County Ireland via ocean liner. Sister Marie Noel traveled across the Pacific from a convent in Japan.

Sister Fintan was assigned to be the convent secretary and housekeeper. She visited the sick, the dying and those grieving after a loss of a loved one. At that time, the sisters were not permitted to socialize outside the convent. Sister Fintan was the exception to the rule as she was permitted her visits of mercy in the community.

On September 10, 1950, the grade school opened with grades one through six. In 1951, funds totaling \$64,000 were raised to pay off debts and expand to include seventh and eighth grades.

Francis Passalacqua was instrumental in procuring housing for the sisters who arrived to teach at St John's School. The first convent was located at 321 Haydon St. where the present day Haydon Street Inn is located.



Source: Mary Madden

First Healdsburg convent on Haydon St.

The sisters' needs were minimal. They lived very simply. The nuns took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. At that time they did not partake in alcohol or entertain. Their habit was made of black wool serge. The nuns' simple lifestyle was supported by tuition received from the school and funds that were raised from the parishioners and event fundraisers. There was no individual income. Monies received went to support the entire community of sisters.

Sister Monica and Sister Michael Arrive

In 1958, Sister Monica (Monica Dunne) arrived at St. John's from Ireland. She was assigned

to teach fourth grade. At that time, there were eight teaching nuns and Sister Fintan.



Source: Monica Dunne

*St. John's sixth grade class, 1974
(Sister Monica standing far left)*

In 1964, Sister Michael (Mary Madden) came from Ireland to teach second grade at St. John's. She enjoyed the community of Healdsburg during her tenure at St. John's. Sister Michael was later transferred to St. Veronica's in San Bruno, but returned to Healdsburg in 1972. She missed the community of Healdsburg and climate while teaching in San Bruno.



Source: Mary Madden

Sister Michael, August 1965

Second Convent and Plans for Expansion

The second convent was completed in 1963. It was located on the corner of Tucker and Fitch Streets.

There were also plans to start a novitiate in a home secured for the sisters next door to the

convent. The home was used mainly for visiting nuns, but was never used as a novitiate for Sisters of the Infant Jesus. There were no new vocations to the religious order in the area.

During the school year, the nuns taught full time. In the summers, they attended continuing education classes at the University of San Francisco. On some occasions, they returned to Ireland to visit the motherhouse/convent/novitiate of their order.

Changes in the Church and society in general saw the number of vocations to the religious life decrease in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. Due to the diminishing number of women aspiring to join the Order of the Infant Jesus in the United States, all the sisters of the Order of the Infant Jesus were recalled to Ireland by the Mother Superior. There was no future in the United States for the order of nuns from Cork County, Ireland.

Changes for Monica and Mary

Sister Monica (Monica Dunne) and Sister Michael (Mary Madden) chose to remain in Sonoma County to continue their vocations as dedicated teachers, but chose to no longer be in the religious order in Ireland. Both left the Order of the Infant Jesus.

Monica Dunne and Mary Madden both preferred to teach in Catholic schools. Monica continued to teach at St. John's in Healdsburg and Mary went to St. Francis Solano School in Sonoma.

Changes for St. John's Schools

The Sisters of the Infant Jesus were dedicated teachers at St. John's from 1950 until 1987. In 1987, the Sisters of the Infant Jesus returned to Ireland. St. John's School was fully staffed with lay teachers.

Monica Dunne reported, "During the 1980s, I took my fourth grade classes across the street to the home of Mrs. Maher on the corner of East and Tucker Streets. Mrs. Maher was a great historian for local history lessons."

Another community outreach opportunity was visiting a nearby rest home. "The nuns' convent had become a 'rest home' for the aged. We took our classes there to help celebrate birthdays and special occasions with the residents of the rest home near the school."

Reunited

Mary Madden and Monica Dunne were reunited in 2004. They now share a small home in the locale of their former convent. We "love Healdsburg, the generous people and many former students and families are now friends." They continue to volunteer in the community.



Source: Mary Madden

Mary and Monica during a trip to Ireland, Fall, 2015

Some of their former students still live in Healdsburg and have occupations in business, civil service, construction, education, law and medicine. Families of former students include Bucher, Buchignani, Dale, Eddinger, Grace, Halverson, Havilland, LaBrett, Levinger, Maguire, Max, Mesas, Neal, Opperman, Pedroni, Passalacqua, Pedroncelli, Sauzo, Seppi, Seghesio, Vercelli and Zimmerman.

Former Pupil Now a Director

Today St. John's has an enrollment of 227 students. Spanish and standard curriculums are also offered. The school's educational program incorporates technology with each student having an iPad or a computer. Now the lay staff teaches religion.

Anne Seppi is the Director of Development for Saint John's School. "Some of the faculty has been with St. John's for 20 years. Over 90% of our graduates are on the honor roll in high school," Director Seppi reported. "A handful of St. John's alumni have children as students in the school."

Director Seppi is also an alumnus of St. John's. She was one of Monica Dunne's former students. Monica taught Anne in fourth grade during the 1991 - 1992 school year.

The Library Gets Wired

by Carol Peterson

Few people would be surprised to hear that research methods used by students in the Healdsburg High School Library changed drastically during my tenure (1987 – 2014) as the school librarian.

Picture the Healdsburg High School Library in 1987. Technological devices consisted of an overhead projector, a copy machine and two microfiche readers.

A student writing a research paper had no access to desktop computers, laptops, tablets, cell phones or Google. Information came from books and magazines and there was much to learn about the use of indexes and the library's card catalog before research could begin.

You may recall *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, the staple of popular magazine research: fat green volumes with tiny print on tissue-thin pages filled with many confusing abbreviations. Each volume indexed one year of magazines with topics, article titles and authors' names in one long alphabetized list. Researching a topic had to be done one year at a time, checking one cumbersome volume after another. I spent a considerable amount of time patiently instructing students on the use of *The Reader's Guide*.

Hundreds of periodicals were indexed, so the students had to check the library's list of magazine subscriptions to make sure the desired articles were available. Then they needed to fill out and turn in a request slip and wait at the counter for the magazine, or maybe a piece of microfiche, to be fetched by the librarian.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Typical card catalogue

The teacher also required students to get information from books. I instructed the class in the use of the card catalog, showing them how to look up a book by author, title or subject. Students would then hover around the card catalog, wait for a space to clear, find the correct drawer and flip through the alphabetically ordered cards. And who knew what subject terms the “persnickety” library vocabulary used? Looking up “cars” the student would find a card telling him to “see – Automobiles.” Frustrating!

I used an overhead projector and transparencies to instruct the students. A typewriter gave the transparencies a clean, though no doubt, boring look. There was, of course, no way to change the font size or style on a typewriter.

Writing a research paper was a long process involving a week or more of class trips to the library. The process began with selecting a topic and continued with formulating a thesis statement, gathering sources, writing note cards, developing rough drafts and, finally, the finished project. It was focused, intense, solitary and generally quiet in those days when teachers and librarians would not tolerate noise above a low conversation.

Within a few years, new technologies began to appear in the library. People may think that libraries being the traditional institutions they are would be slow to embrace technology, but the opposite is true. Records kept in libraries and their corresponding databases, whether for the organization of the library's collection, the searching for information or patron records, are perfectly suited to digitization.

Research methods changed drastically. Computers came to the high school library. The card catalog went online, as did *The Reader's Guide*. The card catalog and the “big green books” were removed, making room for 12 computers and a network printer.

At first, subject CDs were used to research history, art, literature and the sciences. Soon periodical databases indexed all sorts of magazines, many more than the library could ever subscribe to. Full text articles were often available with just one

keystroke. An article could be printed or the student could email it to himself. The online card catalog featured a much more intuitive search capability (it was now okay to use the term “cars.”) And alphabetical order? No longer needed!

Internet research was available and students needed to learn that Google and Wikipedia were not necessarily reliable sources of information. They needed to learn about “vetted” search engines where the websites had already been evaluated. They learned to watch for very real-looking hoax websites such as “Feline Reactions to Bearded Men” and *Time* magazine’s coverage of “The First Pregnant Man.” They needed to learn to recognize hate sites, and websites with a hidden agenda. They needed to learn that school computers (and the school’s already over-burdened network) were not to be used for games, eBay, Live Journal, My Space, Facebook or whatever the next “attractive nuisance” social media site happened to be.

Eventually, the Internet was accessed by a school-wide wireless network. Instruction was no longer given on an overhead projector, but with a data projector connected to a wireless laptop and projected onto a screen. PowerPoints were much more interesting than an overhead transparency and being able to project a website for all students to see was a game-changer.

The library became the keeper of nearly 100 laptops for student use. During a library remodel in 2007, smaller round and square tables more conducive to collaboration and project-based learning replaced long rectangular tables. A dozen custom-made Adirondack-style chairs, cool-looking and with arms big enough to hold a laptop, were put in a circle and became the most popular seats in the library. Long research papers were replaced by quicker “eye-search” papers often completed by a group of students rather than by an individual.

The library had become a noisier place, a result of collaborative learning and probably also a result of younger teachers who themselves had been educated after the days of “shushing.”

So many changes happened in, relatively speaking, so short a time. When I left the school in 2014, a few classes had issued tablets to students, a one-on-one program that gives each student a tablet to use at school and to take home. Students were typing projects into Google Docs, where the teacher

and others in a group project could read, collaborate, and comment on its progress: a new version of the “rough draft.” The finished product might include a PowerPoint or a video. EBooks are now available from the library, one of the improvements made by a younger and more tech-savvy librarian!



Source: Carol Peterson

Healdsburg High School Library, c. 2012

The high school library remains, in my opinion, the heart of the school. While fewer non-fiction books are being checked out, fiction is still very popular. The library is a very social place, especially before school, at break and during lunch, with all the computers occupied and the printer running nonstop. Often there is standing room only because the library is a friendly meeting place and because teens are very social people. Cell phones have given them more ways to connect with each other than ever before. Texting “where r u” brings friends and study buddies together.

Technology in education continues to evolve, and today’s new thing is tomorrow’s obsolete thing. How students learn and how they do their work is changing all the time. From yesterday’s chalk and inkwells, typewriters and mimeographs, overheads, opaque projectors and copy machines, to laptops and tablets and whiteboard projector screens, schools are challenged to provide teachers and students alike with the skills and equipment they need, as the pace of change accelerates. And the students learning with today’s technology will be the innovators of the “Next New Thing.”



Source: Ann Carranza

Erika McGuire, 2016

Erika McGuire

by Ann Carranza

Erika Fremault McGuire, best known as the wife of popular State Senator Mike McGuire, is a personable woman and a powerhouse in her own right. In fact, Erika is a mover and shaker in the Healdsburg school system, where she serves as vice principal, teacher and counselor at Healdsburg Junior High and teacher at Healdsburg High School.

Erika grew up on the west side of Santa Rosa and attended Piner High School. Her parents, Carol and Bob Fremault, still live in the home where she was raised. Her family is staunchly Democratic and Erika became interested in politics early. She attended Sonoma State University, where she majored in Political Science and reveled in the small class size. She graduated with her bachelor's degree in 2002. Right from the start, Erika believed her future held public service and government.

Erika spent two years working for Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey as a staff assistant, collecting clips, as well as working women's issues

events and as a scheduler. She still remains in touch with the now-retired Woolsey.

Erika enjoyed the political realm and wanted to work on policy. She had "high hopes and big dreams—and no job."

She did work with State Senator Mike Machado in his San Joaquin and Yolo County offices. Once again, Erika was a scheduler and added legislative aide to her resume. She worked for then-Senator Machado 2004-2005. The job lasted less than two years.

But, that also was the point when she and Mike McGuire got together. Erika and Mike shared classes at Sonoma State and were friendly, but didn't spend a lot of time together. It was during her stint with Congresswoman Woolsey that they began dating. By December 2005, they were a couple, and in February 2006, Erika moved back to Sonoma County.

She started to work for the American Cancer Society (ACS) as the Community Development Manager and worked on Five Relays for Life cycles. Her passion for ACS and Relay were driven by her love for her aunt, Sara Winter, who had cancer.

“Doing relay built community and there’s a lot of ‘politicking’ in Relay. I wanted to give back and make a difference,” she continued. (ACS is the biggest funder of cancer research.)

However, in 2007, Erika decided to return to Sonoma State University for her teaching credential. Both her aunt and mother were teachers early in their careers. Before making her decision final, she ran the idea by Mike and he replied in a way that Healdsburg residents have come to expect, “Yes, you can.”

Erika spent a year at Sonoma State and earned a single subject credential in Social Science. She cites her Methods Course on designing history lessons as incredibly valuable. Erika went on to student teach at Santa Rosa High School. She had two on-the-job mentors, Art Horner and Regina Brennan.

“Each is a phenomenal teacher, though they have very different styles,” said Erika. She taught United States Government to seniors and World History to sophomores.

“The students were responsive and respectful,” Erika said. “I think some high school students appreciate a younger teacher, as the teacher ‘gets it’ and they are more up-to-date with pop culture.”

While Erika often feels like she’s meeting herself “coming and going,” she loves that she’s still a teacher. Although she enjoys administrative work, Erika simply loves teaching.

“I feel really lucky to be at Healdsburg Junior High working collaboratively with [Principal] Bill Halliday,” she said. There are about 370 students at the junior high and more than 675 students at the high school. When Erika is at the high school, she teaches two small classes.

In her private life, Erika meets herself “coming and going” as well. Mike travels across Northern California from his Sacramento base at the Capitol. They both travel to and from Sacramento during the week and still manage to spend quality time as a couple.

When Mike began his term in the state senate in January, 2015, he packed every Monday and came home on Thursdays. It became their regular schedule after five or six weeks. They spend most Sundays together.

“Our routine works for us,” said Erika. They still go on morning walks together and spend most weekends together, traveling, if that’s on the schedule. Erika goes to Sacramento once a week or Mike comes home to Healdsburg. They’re putting a lot of miles on their cars.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Healdsburg Junior High School classroom, 2015

Meanwhile, Erika spends most of her time at the schools and with school-related activities.

“These really are community schools,” she states. “I feel so grateful to have gotten a job, to be teaching in Healdsburg and to live and work in this community.”

Sixteen of Erika’s high school students are busy tutoring fifth grade students, in a cross-age after school tutoring program. The high school students work primarily in math with the younger students, helping with their homework and playing math games with them, though they also help with spelling and grammar.

She says the schools are filled with “fantastic teachers” and the students are well-cared-for. “I feel like I’m having an impact on kids’ lives.” Erika is highly visible and enjoys conversing with the students about their lives and their various activities.

Erika and Mike could easily be dubbed Mr. and Mrs. Healdsburg, with their community-minded spirit and visibility across the region. They are both community builders, symbolizing what’s best about the Healdsburg community.



Source: Healdsburg Museum Collection

Healdsburg High School Bus Fleet, c. 1922

Third Class



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