

The Legacy

Lompoc Valley Historical Society's Quarterly Newsletter

INSIDE THE FIGHT FOR A NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL 1919-1921 *by Marcia Harris Hart*



From 1891 or later, Grammar school with side room additions.

The Landmark Victorian “in town” Lompoc Grammar School is eloquently described in “Historical Ramblings” by Dennis Hendricks under “Lompoc Grammar School”.

“The two-story wooden structure topped with a cupola stood majestically with its facade facing south on property set aside by the Land Company, in 1874 for a

public school, near the corner of H Street and Chestnut Avenue. The school cost \$3,000 to build in 1876. As Lompoc’s population continued to grow four additional rooms were added in 1891, two each on the east and west sides.” In 1911 another two-story four classroom building was constructed. Called the “Industrial Building”, it opened in 1912.

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With the joyous end to the First World War, November 11th 1918, Lompoc happily turned its focus on needed improvements for the town. The P.T.A and women's Alpha and Civic clubs attention was on the old school's shortcomings. Standing tall and beloved by the town the aging grammar school lighting was badly arranged and the heating plant consisted of stoves that required the greater part of a man's time to carry up fuel and down ashes. In May 1919, a women's committee was formed, Mrs. Mark Rucker, chairwoman to give publicity to these needs and educate public sentiment. Quoting from the Lompoc Review "This agitation seems likely and these women seem to have a reputation of accomplishing things in this line." At the Chamber of Commerce meeting, June 1919, a resolution endorsing a State Highway Bond Issue was addressed. The Road Committee reported its activities and the Grammar school committee, Mrs. M Rucker, Mrs. J Sloan and Mrs. J Burton, introduced the subject of a new Grammar school. In reviewing the situation the ladies had found that to put the old building in repair would cost considerable and the

money spent would be wasted. They pointed to the fact that the material now in the old building was so old that anything added could not be made to hold. The fire escapes were an example given. Added a short time ago, the bolts holding the fire escapes had already loosened making them unsafe. The chamber members heartily endorsed the movement. The chamber's Mr. Q.R. McAdam was delegated to confer with the ladies in reviewing the situation.

The next step taken was hiring Louis Crawford, an architectural designer of Santa Maria, to make a survey of the grammar school building and report his findings. Stating that light and air are essential to a good work environment, the lighting is very poor in the Lompoc school. A summary of his other findings were; heating methods were out of date and costly, there was a poor arrangement of floor space, poor ventilation, a great deal of noise from the nearby railroad yard and worst of all, the fire escapes were worthless. Siting the Collinwood, Ohio school fire in 1908, killing 172 students, 2 teachers and one rescuer, Mr. Crawford stated their

Corner of Chestnut and H street, newly built school to replace the original one -1922



building was similar in plan to Lompoc's with a deadly central hall and stair that divide the building and acted as a chimney, sucking flames upward, as the wooden interior burned.

However, progress was set back. In September 1919, Mr. McAdam reported that the women's clubs would hold up in further propaganda relative to the new grammar school idea until road matters have been put into better shape. The fear was that the success of one may interfere with the success of the other. The Road Committee, Mr. J Sloan chairman, reported their petition calling for a bond election was held up pending preparations for plans and specifications.



Finally, the bond election date was set for March 9th, 1920, for the paving of the road to Buellton, the Santa Rita road. The Lompoc Review of March 12th 1920 reports "Bonds for Good Roads Carry Large Majority. Enthusiasts Jubilant. Work To Start Soon. At last the road through the valley and connecting with the outside world seems to be an accomplished fact.

But what has happened to the fight for a new Grammar school?

With school resuming in September of 1920 the P.T.A. and school board met to discuss the possibility of a bond election for a new grammar school. It was decided to hold a mass meeting of the town's people within the next week or two to place the proposition before them. A bond issue for a High School at the same time was suggested.

Two events then occurred. The mass meeting for the school bonds was postponed as the State Superintendent of Schools, addressing the meeting, could not be present. In November, 1920 a Smallpox outbreak in Lompoc became very serious. The grammar school was closed due to the large number of children who had been exposed. The city board of health decided to furnish free vaccine to all the physicians for the community.

Forward to February 1921. The trustees of the grammar school and high school met with the P.T.A. to continue discussions of bond elections to provide funds for constructing a new building for both. In March a food sale, given by the P.T.A., to raise funds for advertising the Lompoc School bonds (when the election is called) was a wonderful success, netting \$130 dollars.

The school bond election was finally set for April 9th 1921. The Alpha Club, Civic Club, Pythian Sister and all local churches unanimously endorsed the proposition for a new grammar school. The backing for the school bond as written by the Lompoc Review March 25th 1921; "The merchant who argues against the Grammar School bonds today on the grounds that material may be cheaper next year may find a prospective customer using the same argument tomorrow. Comparatively a new school building is as necessary as a loaf of bread and more so than an Easter bonnet. The price of bread and bonnet may come down next summer, but we will have them now."

The day before the bond election all stores and business's closed for one hour for a School Bond Parade with speeches that followed. Written up in the April 1st 1921 Lompoc Record "All the children of the city-

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over a half thousand in number-will take part in a big street parade on next Friday afternoon, April 8th. Children from the grammar school and high school will march. Little tots will be carried in floats and babies will be wheeled in their buggies decorated in red, white and blue.”

The parade formed across the street from the grammar school, at the Episcopal Church and marched down H Street to the library, assembling at the vacant lot next to the Opera House. Rousing addresses were given and patriotic music was sung by the children. The Grammar School Bond, \$69,000 for the erection of a new Grammar School building, carried by a margin of 30 votes over the two-thirds majority needed. The high school bond did not, being short 31 votes. Hard work, persistence, plain facts and the spectacular parade finale were thought to have “Won the Day” for a new Lompoc Grammar School.

Building immediately began on the new school building near the corner of Chestnut and H, right in front (south) of the first big building. The old grammar school was torn down in 1922 and the new grammar school, later known as El Camino School, opened September 1st, 1922.

Postscript.

In 1955 the old 1912 “Industrial Building” caught fire and was torn down.

In 1969 the 1922 El Camino School was declared unsafe and razed as it did not meet earthquake standards for schools set forth in the 1933 Field Act. The original cornerstone was removed and its 1921 contents were



looked at. It was then relocated in front of new buildings built on the opposite side of the campus on North J Street, per Dennis Headrick.

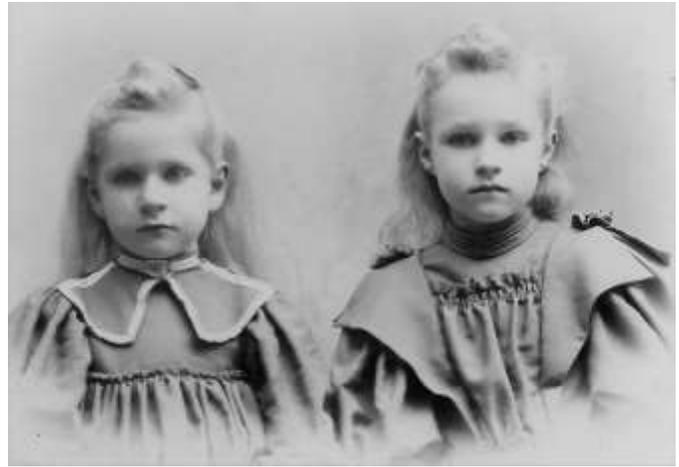
Elementary School in Lompoc Memories of Grace Miles Wellington, the daughter of Lizzie Lutz Miles



*Lizzie B Lutz, age 18, Sept 28
1868: Grand Rapids, Mich*

About 1901 The Lompoc school was not a “proverbial one-room cabin;” it was 2-storied, with 4 rooms per each story. I believe there was also a principal’s office, etc. A wooden building, the school was built

from wide slabs of wood for siding. We three... Marguerite [Mamie] and I, and Carrie Ball, a teacher -- all walked together the 3 blocks from home. The teacher stood on the steps; we formed 2 lines, boys and girls, separately, and she "clapped" us in, keeping time, as we marched into the school. The girls wore one-piece gingham dresses; the boys knee pants and shirts, with ruffled collars Marguerite and I wore "slatted" sun bonnets at home. I don't remember if we wore them at school. There were three classes in each room -- a, b, c -- about 10 or 15 in each class. The teacher used big, paper "chart books" -- about twice as big as large, wall calendars. From that hung on a frame, with the teacher turning each page as we learned our A-B-Cs. There was a "pot-bellied," cast-iron, wood stove for heat. I remember the first day of school, as we walked in, a girl was standing there warming her hands. I thought "My! She forgot to wash her face." I had seen my first native American Indian! I found out her name was Bertha Wind and we became friends. There was another pretty girl with long, black curls. I heard someone remark that she was "Jewish," whatever that meant? Their family name was "Rudolf," and they owned the bank! We had no kindergarten, but on Friday afternoons the youngest students went to the back of the room, sat at a little table, and made paper cut-outs, etc., according to the seasons -- Turkeys, Xmas Trees, Easter Eggs. For years I had a card I had made, with a cut-out hatchet, with red cherries, worked on it in red wool, for Washington's Birthday! Recess-Time There was a high, board fence between the boys' and girls' playgrounds. In the yard, at recess, we girls played Pom-Pom



Grace & Mamie Miles,

Pull-Away, Hopscotch, and Hide and Seek. There was a huge sycamore tree where we ate lunch. The boys played baseball. The Teachers wore simple, dark clothes. Yes, we took flowers to them. In Lompoc, one of mine was a widow lady, and she had short hair, the first woman with short hair that I ever saw. Her younger sister also taught there. For a while, the other teachers in their Lompoc School included Carrie Ball, who was a friend of the Miles family. When living on "Pine" Ave. [in a small, rented house], we played with the little girl next door. The street got its name from a huge pine tree, right in the middle of the street. At that time, Lompoc had no house addresses. My mother worked at the laundry next door, the only one in town. The laundry consisted of an old-fashioned machine, outdoors, run by a horse walking around and around. The laundry owner's daughter sat up in the apple tree and threw apples at the horse whenever he stopped. There were no stores for us to stop at on the way home from school. There was one large grocery right in town, La Mar Bros. My father, William

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Franklin Miles clerked at that store, at one time. Source -- Interview notes from Grace (Miles) Wellington, Interview conducted by her daughter, Elizabeth (Wellington) McCormick, and edited by Elizabeth's daughter, Helen Grace (McCormick) Halmay, Lemon Grove, CA. Copyright 2021. Do Not Copy or Use Without Written Permission

Fossil rock



Rock at the Historical Society

Thanks to long time Lompoc resident Mickey Riegel, the Spanne House has a new addition. What Mickey's family called the "Dinosaur" rock had been living his mother's backyard for years. In June, Mickey contacted Ken Ostini and offered to donate it to the Historical Society. When Ken and a fellow Board member made a visit to Riegel's back yard they found a massive rock, shaped like a skull.

Well, it was not a dinosaur skull, but it was something just as good. It is a large and



The 800 -pound boulder's new home

beautifully weathered boulder of Monterey shale and embedded in the boulder are pieces of fossilized bone.

Ken contacted Rodney Eckert and using his expert skills Rodney maneuvered a Bucket Loader into the Riegel's backyard, lifted the 800 -pound boulder and put it in the back of a truck. Later he carefully placed it in the front yard of the Spanne house.

The boulder originally had been found over forty years ago near where the Salisipuedes Creek joins the Santa Ynez River. It had probably weathered out from the nearby Monterey Formation. This marine formation is from 17 to 5 million years old. It contains fish skeletons and fish scales, shark's teeth, fossilized bones of whales, dolphins, and other sea mammals. Over the years many of these fossils have be found in the hills around Lompoc and sent off to Museums. Now, thanks to Mickey, the Spanne House now has one of its own.

From the Desk of the Treasurer – Jeannette Wynne

I will be mailing out dues renewals in August for members on the annual dues schedule.

Our membership year is Sept. 1st to the following August 31st. Please return dues by September 1, 2021. Mail to P.O. Box 88, Lompoc, CA 93438.

Thank you!

Reference Room Ramblings by Karen Paaske

The reference room area is full of information requests are received constantly. This column reflects a few of the inquiries during the last few months.



The reference room will again be open Monday & Thursday mornings 9am to 11am. School tours will be starting. Need help with volunteers to assist by telling students about the Carriage house, Museum and Blacksmith shop! Send info to lompochistory@gmail.com

Have had lots of inquiries the last few months....the steamer Edith which wrecked in 1849 near the mouth of San Antonio creek, the Miles family in Lompoc, the Grider family, and Harris Station.

Also, for anyone interested in oral histories, there is a wonderful app called "Otter." The historical society will be starting to do histories again for those who have lived here for many years. Use this for your grandmother and grandfather to record their memories.

Just read a year long diary from about 1885 in Lompoc. Families had to work so hard just to survive and we complain about cleaning, going to the grocery store, or the electric bill!

Hope to see all of you at our Labor Day events.



The American Flag now flies again by the Historical Society thanks to Dr. Blake Jamison who provided funding for the flagpole to be refurbished.



Thanks, Doc!

May, June & July 2021 Memorials & Membership

Welcome New Members
Steve & Nancy Straight (Lifetime)

Total Number of Members: 373

Joe Signorelli
Walter B. Anderson M.D.
Recently passed away

Memorials for
Barbara Mundell Cabral
Mike McVicar
Alyce Martin
Joe Signorelli
Walter B. Anderson M.D.
also
Garry & Gail Benson and
Headrick & Howerton Families

We also received a donation in Honor of
Myra Manfrina's 100th Birthday

Up and Coming Events...

Executive Board

Ken Ostini - President
Ardeane Machado Eckert - 1st Vice President
Dr. Blake Jamison - 2nd Vice President
Linda Warren - Secretary
Jeannette Miller Wynne - Treasurer
Lynn Romine - Corresponding Secretary

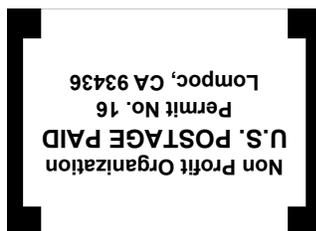
Directors

Myra Huyck Manfrina, Dan Dutra, Rose
Machado Roberts, Jesse Jones, Irma Gadway,
Karen Paaske, Don Fletcher, Sherrie Chavez,
Debbie Schuyler Manfrina, Larry Huyck, Julie
Ann McLaughlin, Marcia Harris Hart, Eva
Hamon, Steve Junak and Karen Osland

Honorary Board member
Carolyn Huyck Strobel

- **September 3rd & 5th Labor Day weekend events are planned—subject to Coronavirus 19 restrictions.**
- **Friday night dinner at the Elk's**
- **Saturday Open House at “L” & Walnut**
- **Sunday BBQ at Ryon park**

**CELEBRATION
LABOR DAY WEEKEND
SPANNE HOUSE AND OUR
REOPENING OF THE
RETURN FOR THE GRAND**



Lompoc Valley
Historical Society
P. O. Box 88
Lompoc CA 93438

