

Santa Cruz Yesterdays



OLD LAUREL SCHOOL OF 1895-1931

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

The original Laurel school was built in 1895 as part of a rapidly growing school program in Santa Cruz. The new high school opened the same year; additions had been built on Branciforte school on the east side, and Grant school.

These necessary improvements and additions to the local halls of learning bespoke a growing community. They were accomplished with the aid of a successful bond election on March 27, 1894, which provided \$45,000 for the purpose.

The new Laurel school was not the first on "the flat". In 1868 a two room building had been erected for \$1600, in which that same year, Lizzie McCollum and May Cooper began teaching.

The building was known as "the Beach school" to distinguish it

from "the Hill school" on the site at the brow of Mission street hill on which today stands the school administration building.

More Room Needed

When the Laurel school, shown above, was erected, it did not have a full city block including playground. The old "Beach school" was moved to a lot leased at Washington and Center but not until purchase of the corner at Maple and Center was the present Laurel school ground made a full block size.

The pressing need for new school rooms had been partly met in 1893 by a lease on the old narrow gauge railroad depot at the beach.

With 190 pupils enrolled in four rooms, the new school opened in the fall of 1895. The teachers were

Stella Finkeldey, Josie Reardon and Mabel Merrill, transferred from other schools, and Mabel Lincoln, newly added to the teaching force.

The building was used until 1931 when it was razed and the present spreading one-story structure erected.

ESTATE IS SETTLED

A petition for final discharge of executors was filed for Vera N. A. Thomas and Phyllis Thomas in the estate of William Evans Thomas. They were represented by attorney D. B. Younger.

LETTERS ARE GRANTED

Letters testamentary were granted to Lila Ditoy in the estate of Louis Ditoy. The petitioner and Attorney Donald Younger were witnesses.