

A glimpse of 1948



contributed

Betty Bivins, who owned the 1948 copy of *The Yearling* yearbook, is shown at back row, center, as the baseball team's pitcher. *Watsonville-2000*

Roache School's yearbook is a window to Watsonville's past

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WATSONVILLE — Now and again someone will walk into the Register-Pajaronian with an early-day photo, a curious artifact or story from days past in the Pajaro Valley. Ranches long gone, tales of curious homes now torn down or moved, bars or shops, snapshots of a fire from 50 years ago, yearbooks and news clippings

are the usual faire.

Now, Michelle Platero of Watsonville has shared a well-preserved yearbook, *The Yearling*, from Roache School (currently the Community School on Airport Boulevard). It belonged to her mother, Betty Bivins, and is from 1948.

The 44-page book, held together by two rusting staples,

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1948

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is sandwiched between manila paper covers and features a fawn and a rabbit on the front page.

The booklet contains will and prophecy, personality sketches, sports, parties, various programs and, of course, an autograph page. The gold mine is six well-preserved black and white photographs sprinkled through the booklet depicting "rooms" (classes) and various teams or clubs.

Platero said her mother, whose married name was Betty Jercich, died in July 2005, at 70. She was a graduate of Watsonville High School, class of '53, and worked as campus supervisor at Renaissance High School for close to 30 years.

Some of the text under "Prophecy" includes: "As I look into my crystal ball I see first of all ...

- In the year 1970 we find Robert Atkins seated at his desk at the White House having a conference with his secretary, Velva Leininger. Robert is now president of the U.S.

- Danny Switzer has a job in Walt Disney's Studios — sharpening pencils.

- We find Sammy Zullo a janitor at an old age home owned by Mary Lukrich.

- Bill Goldman is now working for the Brooklyn Dodgers — as a water boy.

- Kazuko Emoto is the general manager of a slaughterhouse in Buenos Aires.

- Bob Belgard is entering his hot rod in the 500-mile race in Indianapolis."

One passage notes: "In the spring of 1945 six schools — Amesti, Calabasas, Fruitvale, Larkin Valley, Roache and San Andreas — joined together to form Freedom Union School. For a year we used the Amesti building for the primary grades



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One photo, labeled Mrs. Knotts' room, features: first row: Jim Ivelich, Donald Williams, Ronald Irish, Gerald Fagundes, Raymond Zibble, and Robert Welch. Second row: Sammy Zullo, Shyun Yasumoto, Danny Switzer, Don Pimentel, Frank Herrea, Bill Goldman, and Hubert Gracey. Third row: Tommy Johnson, Gayle Barnes, Donna Bilyew, Richard Jones, Johnnie Knauss, Robert Atkins, and Wayne Carpenter. Fourth row: Asako Yoshida, Louise Casillas, Mary Quintero, Mary Lukrich, Loretta Bridgette, Jo-Ann Parsons, and Kazuko Emoto. Fifth row: Barbara Rhody, Betty Bivins, Jo-Ann Grinstead, Velva Leininger, Betty Bloom, Dorothy Harris, Jean Cobb. Teacher: Mrs. Knotts. Doris Roach, Dan McFarland and Marion Mitchell were absent when the picture was taken.

and the Roache building for the upper grades.

"Someone suggested that we use the Navy base. Men from the State Department came to look over the place and see if it was suitable for a school. After a considerable amount of rebuilding it was converted over to a school."

Under "Personality Sketches," three of four sentences are dedicated to each student, for example:

- Tommy Johnson was born on Dec. 11, 1934, 14 years ago at Hollister. He was to become a friend to everybody. His life ambition is to become a radio technician.

- Wasn't it a lucky day for music the day Jim Ivelich was born? Yes, it was Jan 1, 1935.

What do you know, a New Year's baby! Jim's ambition must be to stop Old Father Time. His real ambition is to be an orchestra leader.

- Doris Roach. Have you seen the beauty of them all? Just ask E.A. Hall. She was born on May 4, 1934, at 4 in the morning. She wants to be a nurse when she graduates from high school. Yes, it's none other than Doris Roach.

- Asako Yoshida. On Nov. 10, in the year 1935, a little girl was born. She is now 4-feet, 9-inches tall and weighs 72 pounds. She is very cute and has a happy sounding giggle and plays baseball. She also would like to be a secretary.