

38—Santa Cruz Sentinel

Sunday, September 28, 1975

# Santa Cruz High School Celebrates Centennial Anniversary This Year

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Santa Cruz High School will celebrate its centennial this school year, an anniversary which shows the school to be half as old as the nation.

By the time school opened 100 years ago, on July 31, 1875, with 442 boys and 475 girls, plus 440 children of both sexes under five years old, the town's first high school building was ready for a coat of paint.

But it wasn't until March of '76 that classes moved into the new three-story building, the town's most imposing structure. It cost an impressive \$20,320, including walls and outside work (the contract was only for \$16,500 to cover the building).

There were two stacks of chimneys on the brick building with its mansard roof.

It had room for 600 pupils, and high school students occupied the third floor while their younger brothers and sisters held elementary classes downstairs.

The new school also had the public library tucked under its roof.

In those days, it was located atop Mission Hill, where the Santa Cruz City Schools offices are located today.

It wasn't until 1895 that Santa Cruz High had a new building on its present site on Walnut at Blackburn Streets, and that one burned down in 1913. The present building took another two years to construct.

High school in the late 1800s had only three years: Junior, Middle and Senior. It wasn't accredited for the University of California until after 1889.

Subject choice was limited: "students were sometimes allowed to choose between drawing and botany," the Santa Cruz High yearbook. The Trident, noted in 1915 in comparison with that year's "rich" curriculum. And about 1902 or '03, students could substitute

German for the last two years of Latin.

Citizens then as now weren't too interested in taxing themselves for education, when a bond issue was being considered for the first high school in 1874. Santa Cruz Sentinel editor Henry G. Shaw complained that "a degree of indifference seems to prevail in the community in regard to school matters."

"Santa Cruz is painfully deficient in proper accommodations for the education of her children," Shaw declared, "and can pride herself on possessing the shabbiest school buildings in the State of California."

"The pupils are packed like sardines, in badly ventilated rooms, and are denied the schoolhouse facilities extended to the children of more wide-awake and generous communities. This is a condition of affairs to be deplored, and demands speedy correction."

The bond election wasn't even for the \$20,000 itself, but only for the interest (it came to 2.55 percent) which was to cost the 1875 voter 1.4 cents on the tax rate.

After considerable discussion

in the editorial section and letters to the editor, the bond election was held Oct. 3, 1874. The result: 204 persons voted, 157 in favor of the bonds and 47 against.

Getting money for a school was about as hard as getting money to run it. The first principal of the new high school, W.W. Anderson, retired in 1880 when the state failed to come up with money for the schools.

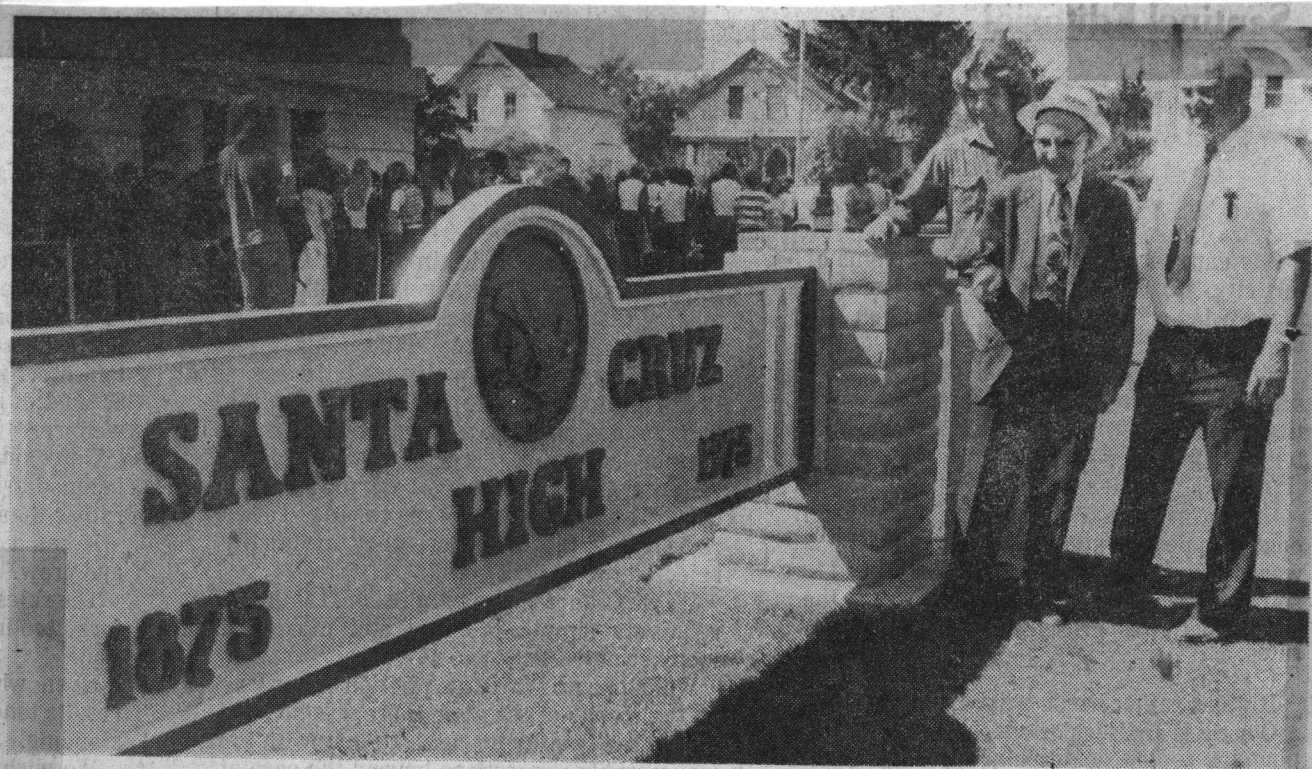
School Trustee E.C. Boston recounted in the Trident how trustees went door-to-door to raise salaries for the two or three teachers they could keep. And the doors in Santa Cruz were very far apart in those days.

"When it was heard that the butcher had some business to do on the outskirts of town or perhaps a few miles into the country, there was a chance for a 'joy ride' and a business trip into the bargain," the Trident remarked.

Teachers who complain of large classes might have sympathized with H.E. Makinney, whose 1871 class had 74 pupils in one room. The Sentinel of that day noted that Professor Beasley of Santa Cruz arranged to "give instruction to 30 of them in three different studies." It also noted that of the 74, "quite a number of them are young ladies and gentlemen." It apparently referred to their age, not their decorum.

When the new school was

## School



Celebrating its centennial year, Santa Cruz High School has a new sign at the campus entrance on Walnut Street. It was carved by artist Steve Moody, left, and was paid for by

built in 1895, the old school became Mission Hill, and later Mission Hill Junior High School (it was torn down after the present junior high was built).

Aside from a missing bell clapper (presumably stolen by a mischievous student or students), not much of note happened at Santa Cruz High until the night of Oct. 1, 1913.

The Trident's writer, whose name is unlisted, noted that "as I lingered at the dinner table, I was startled by someone crying under my window. 'The high school is burning!'" In a few seconds, I had hat and coat and

was running for a car.

"Against the western sky was a terribly beautiful red glow. Presently flames could be seen leaping up. I went on as in a daze. The eastside fire bell kept up one continual and awful appeal. Automobiles shot by. Crowds were running and shouting.

"As we neared town, everyone in the crowded car was standing, and some were saying it couldn't be the high school. But the ones who cared most could say nothing, but just press on doggedly and finally stand up there in the midst of

student body funds and public contributions. With Moody at the dedication ceremonies last week were C.E. (Doc) Fehliman and Santa Cruz High Principal James Coulter.

that seething, heated crowd and watch, watch, with a peculiar fascination, the destruction of cherished possessions," he wrote.

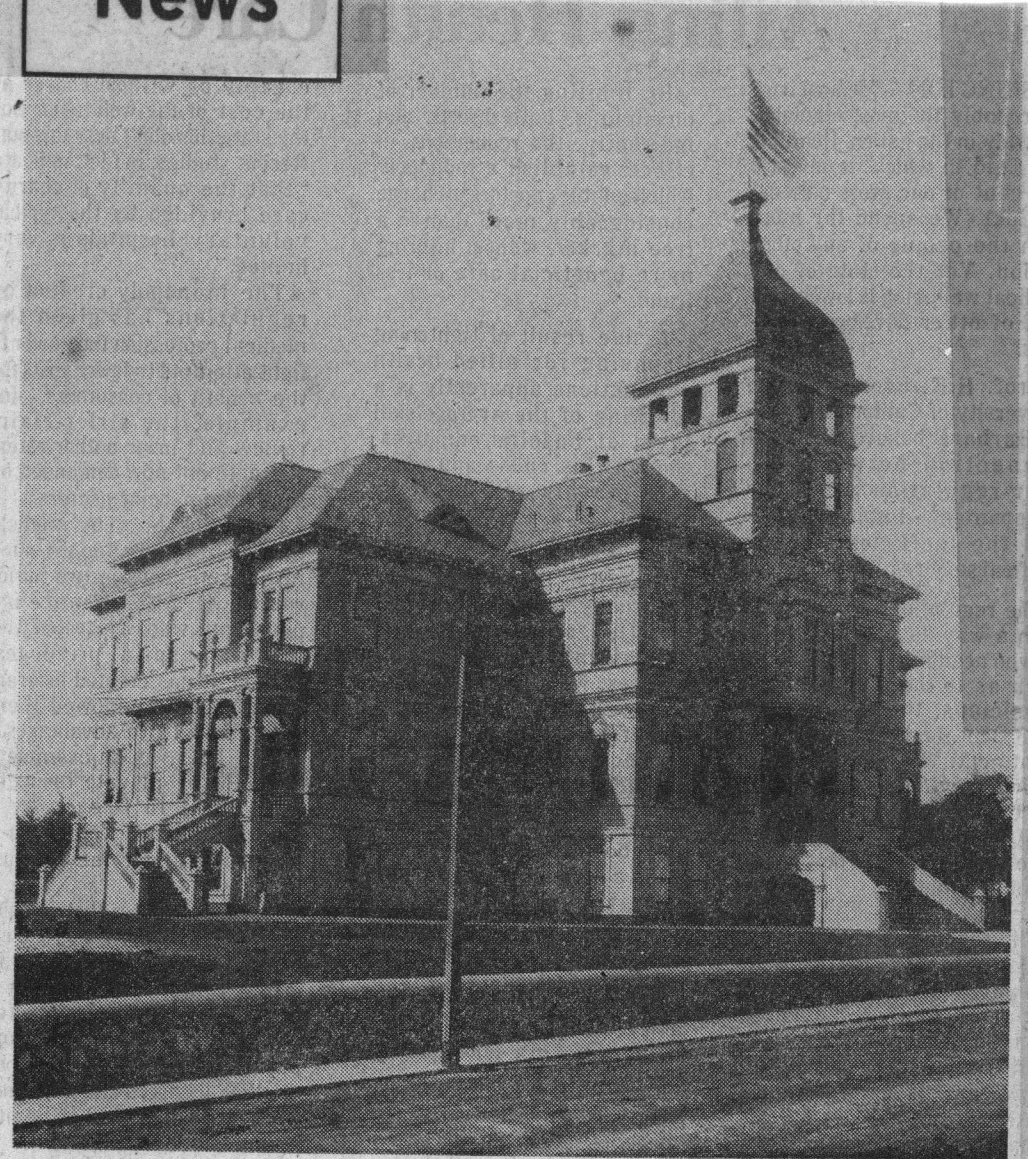
The burning of the high school destroyed most records, and the Santa Cruz Alumni Assn., started when the school opened in '75, had a hard time recollecting records of graduates and other material in the ensuing years. Most of these records have come from other graduates and from one record book which happened to be out of the school at the time of the fire, according to Doc Fehliman, once a

teacher himself and now historian for the alumni association.

Santa Cruz High's new building lasted until 1961, when a concerned school board had its main structure rebuilt for greater earthquake safety. Other buildings, including a music and secondary classroom building, were added.

James Coulter, the high school's present principal, said that centennial celebrations for the school are still in the planning stage, and probably will be tied in with the national Bicentennial celebration in 1976.

## News



Santa Cruz High School's first building on its present site was this three-story edifice, plus rotunda. It was built in 1895 and replaced the city's first high school across from Holy Cross Church, where the Santa Cruz

City School offices now are. That school later became Mission Hill Jr. High, and was torn down when the present Mission Hill was built. The building shown here burned

down in 1913 with what a Trident yearbook writer said was a "terribly beautiful red glow." The school celebrates its 100th anniversary this school year.