

SCHOOL DAYS IN HAWTHORNE

High School

Some time after high school courses were offered students who had completed their eighth grade requirements and some reference has been found to graduates of Hawthorne High School. Mineral County High School was established in January 1915, according to William House, now a resident of Monterey, Calif., who was the first -- and only -- member of the 1918 graduating class of MCHS. House recalls that in his freshman year the professor was Hans Harthan; (he does not recall the name of professor in the second year); but in his junior year the professor was Edward D. Gallagher.

In 1917 the high school classes were moved from the Sixth Street school to two rooms upstairs in the courthouse. At that time the principal was M.J. Burr, who

taught mathematics, history, physics, and other subjects; and a second teacher, Miss Edith Woolridge had been hired to teach English, Spanish, shorthand and typing.

The move from the grammar school building to the courthouse made it possible for students from outside the town of Hawthorne to attend high school. House recalls, and remembers the "student body" in 1917/18 included Violet Fisher, Aurora; Adelaide Reid and Minnie Reid, Fletcher Station; Leo Derig, Thorne; Mary Wright, Luning; Faith White and Donald McLeod as well as himself, Hawthorne.

"When I graduated in 1918, Oscar Gerbig and Marie Stannard were on the Board of Education. They had spent much effort in getting MCHS on its way and were continuing these efforts to make sure it became a

success," House writes. He still has a copy of the 1925 school yearbook, Pen & Inklings, which is dedicated to Mrs. Stannard and Mr. Gerbig.

One year after Bill House became the first MCHS graduate, the students moved from the courthouse to their new and more spacious "home" which had been erected south of the courthouse on C Street, financed by a \$5000 bond issue. Writing about that move in the 1919 Pen & Inklings, Faith White, editor, said:

"Looking back through the school year, one can see the many changes that have taken place. At first we had to go to school in two stuffy rooms in the courthouse. While there we watched the new High School spring up, waiting patiently to be in it.

"Then, on the ninth of February, school opened in the new building. How nice and sunshiny and airy it seemed, compared with the two rooms in the courthouse.

From then on we started to enjoy school. We could have our dances in the auditorium and have even so many good times. We had two entertainments and two dance parties.

"Also, how much better we have studied in the new High School. Everything seemed so much nicer and easier. We hope that the students who come here next year to go to school in, and go on making M.C.H.S. recognized throughout the state."

That building, which today serves as the administration office for the county school system, was the only facility for high school classes until World War II when a larger frame structure was erected on A Street. This facility was enlarged when an adjoining concrete building was erected in the post-war period.

In succeeding years additional buildings have been erected at the A Street complex to serve the needs of the students of Mineral

County High School. These include a large gymnasium, constructed to replace the original gymnasium located at D and Sixth Streets. The latter, presently used for the Ye Ole Gym recreational program, was constructed in 1930 at a cost of approximately \$15,000 and provided school students their first opportunity to participate in "indoor" athletic competition."

Interesting to note is the fact that there was no such thing as a school bus in Hawthorne until the Naval Ammunition Depot was commissioned in 1930. When the navy learned it had no funds to operate its own school it quickly found funds to purchase a 4-cylinder Ford bus which transported students from the depot to town.

Encouraged by this "innovation" the residents of Mina insisted "their kids"

were entitled to similar consideration and no longer should be forced to "board and room" with relatives or friends in Hawthorne in order to attend high school. (Some years Mina provided more than half of the total high school enrollment.)

A special election was held in April 1955 and non-property owners favored the bond issue by a vote of 127-101, but property owners defended the proposal 88-75, a margin of 13 votes.

Although enrollment in the Hawthorne schools is not as large today as during the war years, both the Hawthorne Primary-Elementary-Junior High system and the Mineral County High School are providing educational opportunities for far more students than the founders of the town ever could have believed would be living here.

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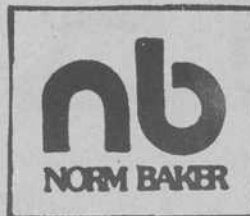
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