

100
YEARS



of PUBLIC EDUCATION
IN SAN DIEGO

July 1, 1854 to June 30, 1954



San Diego City Schools
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

An official publication of the
San Diego Unified School District
Education Center
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FOREWORD

For many years it has been the custom of the San Diego City Schools to issue an annual report to the community summarizing the activities of the major departments of the school system. Since 1954 is the Centennial of our public school system in San Diego, the report this year is devoted to a review of some of the highlights in the story of a hundred years of public education in our community.

The public school is the people's school. It is responsible only to the people's will. More than any other American institution the public school has been shaped directly by the tireless efforts of citizens. For this reason, as we scan a hundred years of local San Diego history, we see clearly that the progress of the community and its public schools are interdependent and inseparable.

In the last section of the report are listed the chief goals of our public schools. As we face the second century in a world of great uncertainty, it is all the more important that the schools have clearly defined objectives, understood and accepted by the parents and citizens of the community, in the training and guidance of today's children and youth.

RALPH DAILARD
Superintendent of Schools

To the Hon. the President & Common Council of the City of San Diego

Gentlemen,

As one member of a school committee appointed by your Hon. Body, in the said City - I have the honor to suggest the creation of a board of trustees or school directors - to be in without pecuniary compensation - to be elected with such James, & required to perform such duties - and members of such a Board as you may think proper - I am proud to be doing all that we could reasonably expect - still I think his master would greatly be interested by the aid of some such board as herein suggested. I had had some present paid for by Mr. Gordon for 67 - for securing the door of the school room - a broom - cup - toaster - bracket is needed for the use of the school - I am not aware that anything more is needed at present for the school - Being it is not possible to see the other members of the Committee - I am glad to see the Court, must be very apologetic for signing this alone - Jan: 25. 1877

James H. Robinson 100 1/2

P.S. It has been frequently suggested by business men of our City - that it would be better for the City to build a school house - a teacher's room - than to pay the present rate of rent - I am informed the entire work will be done for the pay of two - the new lot - has cost no money to the City - it is believed that the material, can be had on account of building - every additional house adds something to the value of those already erected - I have reason for making this suggestion - I believe that some 1000 people are upon your honor - they are only prompted by a deep solicitude for our free school.

James H. Robinson

James H. Robinson
100 1/2
100 1/2

San Diego First Series Document
25 JAN 1877
(Original in Archives of City)

• **A Public School Is Born**

When California became a state and was admitted to the Union, San Diego was one of the original counties created by the first legislature on February 18, 1850. It was one of the largest counties, embracing approximately 40,000 square miles, including what are now San Bernardino, Imperial, Riverside, San Diego and part of Inyo Counties.

Among the conditions of statehood, the California legislature was to provide for a system of common schools. Each district was to maintain a school for at least three months in a year. Failure to do so would cause the district to forfeit its yearly share of the public fund which was to be derived largely from the sale of lands supplied California by the Congress.

San Diego's first public school under the American flag had its origin at a Common Council meeting on November 7, 1850, when, according to the minutes, Mayor Joshua H. Bean reported that a Miss Dillon was desirous of opening a school. She had a reputation for being a good teacher and the Mayor recommended to the Council that the large front room of the Town House be appropriated for a school room. Because of a tie vote, the motion was not officially passed until the following week (November 14).

However, the spunky school marm told the Council that the room wasn't fit to teach in, and that she wouldn't consider it. She made it very plain that if the Council wanted her services as a teacher, a decent and respectable schoolroom would have to be provided. Agostin Harasthy, the County Sheriff, was commissioned to find rooms that would suit the prospective teacher. On December 26, 1850, he reported that the only adequate rooms available were in his own house. He agreed to rent these to the city for \$60.00 a month on a six-month lease, \$40.00 a month thereafter.

The Council agreed to accept these quarters and to appoint a Mr. Hooper as a committee of one "to wait upon Miss Dillon and learn upon what terms she would engage to teach in the school." Strangely enough, there is no further mention of Miss Dillon in any official records. At the reorganization of the Common Council on January 14, 1851, the new mayor, D. B. Kurtz, appointed a school committee of three members. Thus, the little adobe town of San Diego, with about 250 inhabitants, had its first village school board.

• **San Diego's First Teacher**

The Common Council hired William P. Toler as the first teacher for a five-month term at a salary of \$100.00 a month. He was a native of Venezuela, the son of a Virginia father and a Spanish mother. He was educated in Washington, D.C., and in 1841 was appointed a midshipman in the U. S. Navy by Henry Clay of Kentucky. A year later, on October 19, 1842, he raised the Stars and Stripes at Monterey for Commodore Jones, who made a slight error in judgment and seized California from Mexico four years too soon! In 1848, Toler resigned from the Navy in San Francisco and came to San Diego.

The oldest school document in San Diego's archives bears the date January 28, 1851. It is still in the files of the City Clerk at Civic Center, and consists of a letter to the Common Council from James W. Robinson who was a member of the school committee. Among other things, Judge Robinson wrote "Our present teacher is doing all that we could reasonably expect . . . A lock has been procured & paid for by Mr. Jordan for 6\$—for securing the door of the school room— & a broom—cup & water bucket is needed for the use of the school. I am not aware that anything more is needed at present for the school." In a postscript Judge Robinson suggests that it would be better for the city to build a school house and a teacher's room rather than "to pay the present rate of rent."

Mr. Toler taught a bi-lingual curriculum (English and Spanish), but some criticism was expressed concerning the teaching of Spanish in the school. This appears strange since many San Diegans spoke fluent Spanish. In any event, Mr. Toler resigned in June, 1851, and the Council discontinued the school.

After resigning his teaching job, William Toler helped to form a partnership to start a city at New town on the bay, four miles south of Old San Diego. He became proprietor of the city's new hotel, Pantoja House, and played the role of San Diego's first official greeter—the first Don Diego, so to speak. On January 10, 1852, Toler was elected to the Council and later became Justice of the Peace. Because he had raised the Stars and Stripes at Monterey unofficially for Commodore Jones in 1842, and officially for Commodore Stout in 1846, Toler was the guest of honor at the great 50th anniversary celebration of the latter event in 1896. For the third time, and on the same flagstaff, Toler raised the Colors. He died in Oakland a short time afterwards. Thus ended the colorful life of San Diego's first public school teacher.

● **Educational Doldrums**

Public education in San Diego was in the doldrums between 1851 and 1854. No public school facilities existed from June, 1851, when the first village school was closed, until July 1, 1854. On January 30, 1851, the Council passed an ordinance wherein it was "ordained that a suitable schoolhouse be built in the City of San Diego and that City land be given in payment for such building."

However, all schoolhouse plans dissolved when the community discovered that the city was more than \$10,000 in debt. A city jail had been built which cost over \$7,000 in cash and script, far more than the original estimate. To make matters worse, the cobblestones were not set in cement and the first prisoner had readily dug his way out! City property had to be auctioned to satisfy creditors.

A building boom was on in San Diego and the citizens were too busy to be bothered about a school. There was a city to build, a railway and a port to develop, roads to survey through the mountains, and an Indian uprising to quell in the vicinity of Warner Hot Springs. But by 1854 the boom had "busted."

● **Citizens Demand Action**

On March 1, 1854, it was reported that \$52,891.70 had been distributed to the various counties of the state from the state school fund. But not one cent had come to San Diego because there was no public school in operation. John Judson Ames brought a press to town and started one of California's pioneer newspapers, **The San Diego Herald**. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Paul K. Hubbs, wrote to Editor Ames, "No report or return has been received from your county; consequently, you will get no money!"

On March 1, 1854, an editorial appeared in the **Herald** blasting the county officers for their unpardonable neglect. The citizens were stirred into action and held their first indignation meeting on March 18. A large crowd gathered at the two-room Court House and Town Hall to talk things over. San Diego's first working Chamber of Commerce was appointed at this meeting. Editor Ames continued to press for school action and on April 15, 1854, another rousing editorial appeared in the **Herald**. Ames wrote:

"San Diego is behind the age. She has neither public nor private school—nay worse, her most wealthy citizens (with but very few exceptions) do not avail themselves of the excellent seminaries, which in the north are established . . ."

"It is true that all our citizens cannot afford to indulge in these expensive academies. Then why do they not aid us in forming our own common schools? We see daily running our streets, ragged little urchins who have neither the modesty of youth, nor the decency of slaves. And these are the offspring of the rich as well as the poor—alike they ramble in a state of semi-barbarism."

By July 1, 1854, no school district organization had been effected. This was the deadline. Another month's delay would not permit organization in time to hold a three-month term of school and make the necessary reports before the end of the school year. Fortunately, this was the date on which Judge Cave J. Couets convened the meeting of the Court of Sessions.

Couets was a man of action. The first thing he did on opening court was to appoint Colonel William C. Ferrell to the vacant post of County Assessor. As such, he was ex-officio Superintendent of Common Schools. Ferrell immediately appointed E. V. Shelby school census marshal and directed him to submit immediately a census of the school families and children. Then Ferrell appointed three citizens as county school trustees and instructed them to employ a teacher and to rent a room for a minimum term of three months.

The building they rented was the Fitch-Snook house on Calhoun Street. The first rental voucher, now in the files of the San Diego Historical Society, shows rent paid from August 1 to 22, 1854, at \$6.00 per month and from August 22 to November 1 at \$14.00 per month. The change in rate is puzzling, but it was far cheaper than the \$60.00 per month charged by the County Sheriff for a room in his own home three years earlier in 1851. The teacher hired was Mrs. Fanny A. Stevens. In his memoirs, school trustee Ephraim Morse wrote "Before night a public school was in full operation under the school law of the state." Such speedy action on public business is probably without parallel in history.

● **School District No. 1**

While School District No. 1 became an entity on July 1, 1854, class work did not get under way until August 1. From that date until the present time there has been no break in the continuity of public school education in San Diego. During the next eleven years, school was held in seven different quarters consisting of rented rooms in various houses.

But in 1865 the city erected its first school building, known as the Little Green School, on Mason Street between the present San Diego Avenue and Congress Street. In 1872 the building was moved toward the middle of the block while a fine new two-story Mason Street School was being erected. When the new building was occupied, the little school house was sold. In sad need of repair, it now stands next to the Old San Diego Chamber of Commerce building on Mason Street, a monument to the pioneers who were determined to provide a free public education for San Diego's children.



San Diego's First City-Owned School (1865-1872)



San Diego's First Rented School Building Used in 1851

School Commissioners To Harry A Stevens - Dr
 For Teaching the Public Schools from August
 to Oct 31 at \$40 per Month - - - \$ 120.00
 Harry A Stevens.

Salary Voucher for San Diego's First District School Teacher (1851)

• **State Funds Come to San Diego**

The school district grew slowly but steadily. The first census return is not available, but the first apportionment from the state school fund was made on the basis of 99 children of school age. Census returns for the period 1855 to 1869 show an increase from 117 to 474 children.

Old San Diego, having the only school in the county, got the benefit of the returns from the school fund apportionment. San Diego's first return, on June 25, 1855, amounted to \$116.85. This amount increased to \$1,302.95 on February 1, 1859, an average of \$2.53 per pupil.

In 1860 the Board of Supervisors made the school district boundaries the same as the county, thus the increase in school population in the county and the resulting increase in school funds made possible the building of the Little Green School on Mason Street in 1865.

From the beginning of the Horton boom in 1868 the population increased rapidly. Until two new districts were set up in the new subdivision, Old San Diego drew the state school money for the children of New San Diego. By 1872 the politicians were complaining bitterly of Old San Diego's huge school fund. It was in this same year that the new Mason Street School was built and paid for out of state funds, at the expense of county school children at large.

In 1872 Reverend B. S. Lafferty, County Superintendent, prepared a new school map of the county

showing 14 districts laid out on section and township lines. This map was approved by the Board of Supervisors, which ended the monopoly of School District No. 1. Thenceforth, all 14 districts shared equitably in the semiannual apportionments from the state school fund.

• **Teachers Come and Go**

In the early years of public education in San Diego, there was a continuous turnover of teachers, ranging from a few weeks' service to a year or so. There is very little in the way of records, but one indicates that in 1856 Joshua Sloane taught 32 pupils from January 21 to March 1. The curriculum consisted of orthography (spelling), reading, writing, geography, arithmetic and English grammar. The books used by school master Sloane were typical of the period:

Elementary Spelling Book by Noah Webster

Third Reader by Galem Town

The School Reader by Charles Sanders

Geography by Peter Parley and J. Olney

Intellectual Arithmetic by Warren Colburn

Sloane, who was sometimes referred to as "One-eyed Tomcat," had a short term of office. He was expelled after six weeks for the punishing of children by questionable methods.

Marriage constituted one of the greatest problems in keeping teachers. An early newspaper account credits Daniel Cleveland with the statement, "The people of Old Town complained that they could not keep their teachers. They would speedily be dragged off to the altar by some dissatisfied bachelor, who was eager to change his condition for better or worse!" Marcus Schiller, Superintendent of Schools in 1858-1859, found the "getting and keeping of one teacher for the one public school in the County a perplexing duty."

• **Taxes Were a Problem**

School taxes were a serious problem, and when the Superintendent of Schools failed to send in a report to the State Superintendent of Instruction in 1859, thereby losing state money, the school was once again in danger of closing its doors. Only the assumption of the burden by local taxpayers saved the day.

In 1860 the single public school in San Diego reached only a small portion of the 320 children of school age in the county. Yet it had become an integral part of the community and served children of all classes, creeds and races on an equal footing.



MASON STREET SCHOOL
Photo in 1890's

• **Notes From a Teacher's Diary**

Miss Mary C. Walker taught school in the 1865-1866 term. She was a New England lady who described Old San Diego as an "altogether dreary, sunblasted, point of departure for nowhere. Crude mud houses infested with vermin crowded a barren square in disorder." San Diego must have been a far cry from the lady's trim New England town, grouped around the green common, with gardens and trees on every hand.

Speaking of her teaching experience, Miss Walker said, "I aimed to teach what would be most useful, namely, reading, spelling, arithmetic and how to write letters. At recess the Spanish girls smoked cigartos and the boys amused themselves by lassoing pigs and hens. The Spanish children were very irregular in their attendance at school on account of so many fiestas and amusements of various kinds."

Another interesting sidelight is revealed in Miss Walker's **Public School Teacher's Report** for 1865, when she wrote in the space for "times tardy" that "Clocks not generally used by the heads of families for marking time. Consequently tardiness is the rule and not the exception among the pupils." San Diego was apparently still a land of "manana," not too far removed from the earlier cultures of Spain and Mexico.

• **Alonzo Horton Comes to Town**

The arrival of Alonzo Horton in 1857 was undoubtedly the turning point in San Diego's history. Horton brought with him energy, imagination and courage. He looked eastward beyond the sagebrush flats and envisioned a new city. He had faith in the future of San Diego and bought land cheaply and in large amounts. In three years his sagebrush flats had a population of over 3,000. In spite of the bitter opposition of Old Town, Horton's New San Diego became the heart of the city.



Alonzo Horton in 1867

• **The Three Pink Schools**

In 1868 a school opened in rented rooms near Sixth and B Streets, donated by Mr. Horton. Later in the year, Horton gave a plot of ground at the corner of Sixth and B Streets for a school, but it was 1870 before the first school buildings in New San Diego were erected. These consisted of three small one-room board-and-batten structures, which allowed for a division of pupils into primary, intermediate and higher grades. The outside was first whitewashed and then painted red. The resulting shade caused the buildings to be known as the "Pink Schools."

At this time there were 243 children living in New Town, but a large majority did not attend school. In 1871 a new school was built on the lots donated by a Captain Sherman at 21st and N Streets. This gave San Diego three schools, but all was not well with the educational system. It was said that the schools were in a "deplorable condition because the superintendent was paid nothing, consequently did nothing."



The Three "Pink Schools" at Corner of 6th and B Streets, Photo in 1886

• *The Lean Years*

A special county levy had been declared unconstitutional and the school board faced a serious financial problem. An election was called on April 24, 1874, to vote on a special school tax levy of 30c on each \$100 of assessed valuation. The proposition was soundly defeated.

The next five years were difficult ones for the public schools. Lack of money caused the shortening of school terms, consolidation of classes and the temporary closing of the Sherman School "with the windows covered with boards as a preventive measure."

• *Free Lumber for a New School*

The city continued to grow and criticism mounted about the inadequacy of the school plant. As a result, a special levy to build schools and to employ teachers was passed in 1879. Two years later a city ordinance set aside part of the City Park for schools. That same year Joseph Russ, a Humboldt County lumberman who had done much business in San Diego, offered to donate the lumber for a new school. A bond issue was passed, 163 to 40, and in 1882 San Diego opened its finest school (named Russ) on the site of the present San Diego High School with a principal and four teachers. All grades from



Russ School in 1883

one through eight were taught. In its first year, 276 pupils were enrolled and 32 turned away for lack of room. Mr. J. A. Rice, the first principal of Russ School, resigned in mid-term of 1883 and Miss Kate O. Sessions of Oakland was hired as principal. In 1885 she left school work and entered into the field of horticulture. The name of Kate Sessions is beloved in San Diego and is associated with planting and landscaping in a relentless campaign to beautify the city. Her death in 1939 was a great loss to San Diego. In her memory the Board of Education in 1954 named a new elementary school, soon to be built in Pacific Beach near her former home, the Kate Sessions Elementary School.

• **Boontown Again for San Diego**

The San Diego census of 1885 lists 653 boys and girls, five to seventeen years of age, but only 429 attended public school and 86 attended private school. But of more importance to the city in that same year was the arrival of the first through train from the East via San Bernardino. After long years of planning and disappointments, San Diego was now connected by rail with Los Angeles and points east.

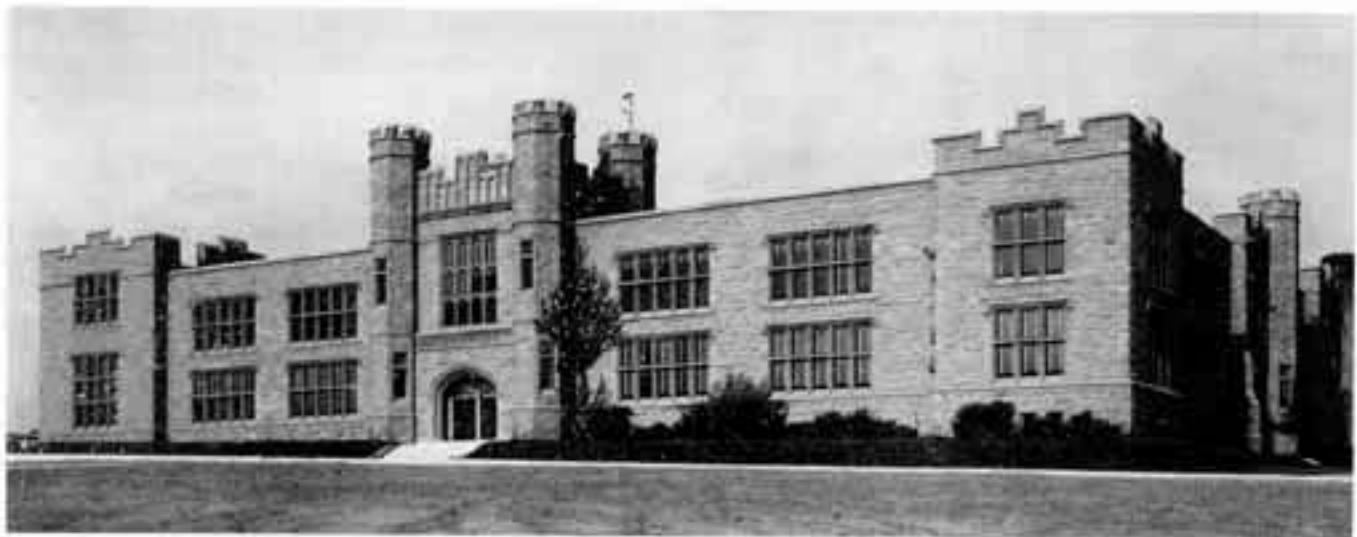
By 1886 the boom was under way and by 1887 it was in full swing. The town's population leaped from 5,000 in 1885 to 50,000 in 1888. People poured in on every steamer and train, and school facilities were strained to the limit. In 1887 the school census listed 2,447, an increase of 75% over the previous year. The school system consisted of the new Russ building, three buildings at 6th and B, a one-room building at 16th and Market, one in Chollas Valley, and one in Old Town. Twenty-five teachers were employed.

• **San Diego's First High School**

High school classes were not organized until 1888 when three high school teachers were added to the staff of the Russ School. But the continued growth of the city demanded a separate plant, and in 1892 Russ High School took over the entire building. In 1903 the Russ School was legally designated as San Diego High School by a vote of the people and in 1908 the old wooden Russ Building was placed on stilts on the edge of the canyon beyond the present plant to make way for the first buildings of the "Gray Castle on the Hill." The old building was destroyed by fire in 1911. San Diego High School with its complete offering of academic, commercial and manual training classes served all the secondary pupils of the city until 1922 when La Jolla Junior-Senior High School was built.

• **More Children—More Schools**

The year 1888 saw the fine new 11-room Middletown School completed on what is now the Washington School site on State Street. In 1889 a new 14-room building known as the B Street School replaced the three "Pink Schools" and the new Sherman Heights School with 14 rooms was opened. A school list of 1889, in addition to the three schools above, includes East School (Logan Heights), Chollas, Mission Valley, Roseville, University Heights, North San Diego (Old Town), Pacific Beach, Sorrento, Coronado and the Russ High School. A decision of the California State Supreme Court on December 12, 1888, had declared "the peninsula known as Coronado Beach to be a part of the City of San Diego."



Russ High School in 1912

• *Ten Years of Retrenchment*

The boom period of the 1880's had collapsed and the period of 1890 to 1900 was one of business stagnation. The population dropped to 17,000, building was at a standstill, and there was much unemployment and hardship. Several schools were closed due to decreased enrollments and teachers' salaries were cut. Incidentally, salaries in this period ranged from \$100 a month for the high school principal to \$40 a month for kindergarten teachers, who had to furnish their own pianos and assistants to play them. Head janitors were paid \$50 a month.

Of particular significance in 1899 was the opening of the San Diego Normal School in a building at what is now Park Boulevard and El Caion. The school offered a two-year post high school course, San Diego's only other experience with higher learning was the establishment of a branch of the University of Southern California in the 1880's, but the venture failed in 1889 with the collapse of the building boom.



B Street School in 1889

• *Trouble With the Fundamentals*

From the records, it would seem that on the whole the community was well pleased with the school curriculum. Douglass Gunn, in his book, **Picturesque San Diego**, states of the year 1887 . . . "educational facilities in San Diego were excellent. The public schools are in charge of an efficient principal with a corps of able assistants. Pupils may graduate from the highest class of the grammar division with diplomas entitling them to admission to the State University."

The School Board records of July 14, 1884, contained this motion: . . . "that the Trustees shall take such measures as they may deem proper and efficient to advertise the present advanced state of our schools, and to assure parents and guardians that students can now be fitted and prepared to enter the scientific department of the University of California."

However, there are some jarring notes in the Board of Education minutes of October 27, 1890: "Mr. Mossholder spoke; he thought there might be something wrong with the course of study. His little boy had attended the Middletown School for a year and could not read yet . . . the teacher should pay more attention to teaching reading. Mr. Stewart said that his boy had attended the B Street School, and for some time had repeated after the other children of the class, pretending to read, but that he could not read at all."

The report indicates that teachers were deviating from the course of study. The Superintendent stated that he had asked the teachers to devote much time to reading, "and had urged primary teachers to give at least three reading lessons each day to the beginners and not less than two reading lessons each day to classes in the 2nd grade."

Further concern for the teaching of the fundamentals is found in a notation in the Board of Education minutes of November 6, 1889: "Several general meetings were held to discuss arithmetic and number work which we believe in some respects is not up to the best standard. These will be continued until some more satisfactory results are arrived at." How familiar is the sound of these criticisms. How far back must we go to find "The Good Old Days?" The late Will Rogers probably summarized it best when he said, "The schools ain't like they used to be, and they probably never was!"

• **Elwood Cubberley Comes to San Diego**

An unknown young professor from Indiana by the name of Elwood Cubberley was elected Superintendent of Schools in 1896. He had won out over strong newspaper opposition which demanded a local man. When Superintendent Cubberley was introduced to the Board of Education on June 1, he is reported to have made the comment "that he would extend many favors to the Press in return for favors from them on behalf of the City Schools." The townspeople soon felt they had a real diplomat and a go-getter in their new Superintendent.

One of the many progressive steps taken by Superintendent Cubberley was to revise the curriculum by means of committees. Teachers at each grade level worked on the materials for their grades. The superintendent, principals and board members acted as a coordinating agency. Cubberley resigned on May 2, 1898, to assume an assistant professorship at Stanford University. He went on to become a famous educator, philosopher, teacher, and writer.

Superintendent Cubberley's departure marks the end of an era—the first fifty years of American public schools in San Diego. The difficult problems faced would have tried the stability of schools with a hundred years of organization and precedent behind them. The schools had weathered three great booms and busts, but they were in sound condition in 1900.

• **San Diego Faces a New Century**

At the turn of the century, San Diego possessed a school system offering classes from kindergarten through Normal School. But the period from 1900 to 1915 was one of slow growth. San Diego was a resort town thriving chiefly on equable climate and still influenced largely by the slow-moving traditions of her neighbors to the south. But rapid changes took place following the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. Many thousands of tourists decided they wanted to live in San Diego and made arrangements for a quick return. During World War I the Navy, Army and Marine Corps expanded facilities many-fold, and thousands of young men, released from service after the war, brought their families to live in San Diego. A vigorous, youthful element became a factor in the city's population so long dominated by the aged and retired.

The continued growth of the city meant problems of finance, housing, and reorganization for the schools. In 1900 the Board of Education discontinued departmentalized instruction (separate classes according to

subjects) in the upper grades of two grammar schools as an experiment. In 1908, however, the upper grades were again departmentalized.

In 1903 the Board of Education decided that handwriting among pupils was not up to standard. The Board minutes of April 7 state: "Writing begins to deteriorate in High School, due in part to too hurried or too much written work." The Superintendent and staff were instructed to give the matter immediate attention.

Serious school housing problems faced the Board of Education. Needs had raced ahead of facilities for several years and many of the earlier buildings were obsolete and in bad condition. The greatest need was felt in the new sections of the town which had sprung up to the north and east on the sagebrush flats and hills. In many parts of the city, classes were held in rented quarters which were not very satisfactory. Between 1900 and 1920, sixteen new elementary schools and the magnificent quarter million dollar San Diego High School (1908) were built. The school population had grown from about 3,000 pupils in 1900 to 14,275 in 1920, not including an additional 5,320 evening high school and part-time pupils (mostly adults).

A school attendance report in 1920 shows 122 pupils enrolled in Junior College. The number increased to 402 in 1925 when the program was taken over by the State Teachers College which occupied the old Normal School building.



Franklin School in 1903



Florence School in 1909



Central School in East San Diego 1918

• **The Start of the 6-3-3 Plan**

Young adolescents from twelve to fourteen in the 7th and 8th grades had always been somewhat of a disciplinary problem. It was often difficult to hold their interest in class work in the traditional eight-grade grammar school. Between 1910 and 1920 there developed a nationwide program to organize junior high schools for pupils in grades 7, 8 and 9. It was felt that pupils in these in-between years needed courses in which they could explore their special abilities and aptitudes. The junior high school could offer shop work, homemaking, music, physical education, and other special classes, as well as student body leadership opportunities. A good early-adolescent guidance program could also be set up in the junior high schools. These factors and many others caused a swing to the 6-3-3 plan—six years in elementary school, three years in junior high school and three years in senior high school.

The first two junior high schools in San Diego were opened in 1922, Memorial (first called Grover Cleveland) and Theodore Roosevelt. La Jolla Junior-Senior High School was also opened in 1922. Woodrow Wilson followed in 1925, along with Point Loma Junior-Senior High School. Pacific Beach Junior High School was finished in 1930.



Roosevelt Junior High School

• **The Roaring Twenties**

By 1925 a new boom was on and there followed the usual upsurge of building and general business. The city saw the establishment of new churches, schools, water works, theaters, recreational facilities, roads and museums. Naval establishments grew rapidly, bringing in a steady source of income in the millions of dollars from military personnel. In 1927 a municipal airport was built virtually in the heart of the city and every encouragement was given to the establishment of an aviation industry in San Diego.

As a result of the boom years of the 20's, school facilities were again woefully inadequate. Many pupils were housed in shacks, temporary quarters and obsolete buildings. In 1928, however, citizens voted to bond themselves to the extent of \$2,315,000 to provide additional school facilities. Several new schools were built and there were many additions made to others. Herbert Hoover High School was completed in 1929 to care for the rapidly expanding population in the eastern part of the city. By 1930 San Diego had a total of 8 junior and senior high schools, a continuation school and 38 elementary schools to serve the needs of 25,721 pupils and 7,701 evening high school and part-time pupils.

• **New Courses of Study**

There was continual curriculum revision during the 20's with emphasis on increased community understanding through intensive study of the pupils' local environment. The needs of the child were stressed and considerable attention was given to developing a testing program to determine the mental abilities of pupils.

Curriculum revision, expansion of the junior high school plan and a wide-scale school building program proceeded with remarkable continuity in spite of the fact that there were four different Superintendents during the decade: Henry Johnson (1919-1926); William John Cooper (1926-1927); Willard Givens (1927-1928); and Walter Hepner (1928-1934).

• **The Difficult Thirties**

The stock market collapse of October 29, 1929, was an ominous warning of things to come in the next decade. The period of 1930 to 1940 was one of depression, retrenchment, hardship, and lowered morale. Because of the need for reducing the tax burden, class sizes were increased, teachers' salaries were lowered and drastic economies applied.

In 1934 another large-scale revision of the course of study was begun. The impact of the great depression, unemployment, relief and government work programs was felt on schools and community life in San Diego. A swing toward vocational and adult education was beginning throughout the nation. The new courses of study offered more variety and the trend was away from the traditional subjects. Preparation for jobs and extensive student counseling were emphasized. High schools throughout the country began to offer a number of new courses in economics and sociology in an effort to help pupils to understand the sudden and somewhat bewildering changes in home and community life resulting from the depression.

Financial problems of the schools during the 30's were difficult. Retrenchment in the early part of the decade was imperative in view of the burden on the local taxpayers. And yet enrollments continued to increase and the schools made every effort to maintain a program which would meet the needs of the community. The Riley-Stewart Act, passed by the State Legislature in 1933, granted much-needed relief for local communities, transferring a major support of school districts from county property taxes to the state general fund.

By 1940 there were 31,484 pupils in regular day classes and 18,907 in continuation, adult, junior college and vocational classes. The physical plant contained 38 elementary schools, 5 junior high schools, 2 junior-senior high schools, 3 high schools, 3 evening high schools, a day and evening junior college, a continuation school and a vocational school.

● **The Schools Face a National Emergency**

The public schools of San Diego faced a far more difficult decade in the 40's than the previous one with all its problems of depression. With the advent of the Second World War in September, 1939, San Diego felt the impact almost at once as military services began to expand, followed by a rapid sweep of industrial employment. Many thousands of new workmen rushed to the city to build quarters for troops and to work in the aircraft factories. There were not enough houses to shelter the new families. Federal housing projects and trailer colonies sprang up all over the city.

Children by the thousands flooded schools planned only for normal community expansion. Many schools

were forced to go on double session, with one group of pupils in the morning from 8:00 a.m. to noon, and another from noon to 4:00 p.m. Even then many rooms were crowded beyond capacity. Providing new school buildings for a war-swollen community was impossible under the "pay-as-you-go" plan started by the Board of Education in 1931.

This was complicated by the fact that most of the new housing areas were on Federally-owned property and not subject to local taxes. Federal grants did not begin to compensate for the increased costs of educating San Diego's children and youth. The Federal Government responded to the urgent appeal of school leaders and built 13 new schools in the city and made grants of several millions of dollars for additions to existing schools.

● **Total War Brings Many Changes**

From the time of America's entry into World War II in December, 1941, until the armistice in 1945, the public schools carried the double burden of maintaining an educational program on the home front and making direct contributions to the war effort. The instructional program could not continue as usual. It had to be vitalized, intensified and accelerated. At the same time, the staff and pupils contributed directly to the war effort. The schools became depots for salvage materials so necessary in the war industries. Pupils and teachers enrolled in Red Cross First Aid classes and volunteered for Civilian Defense jobs. School buildings and personnel were used for sugar and gasoline rationing. Pupils purchased many thousands of dollars of defense bonds and stamps.

Courses in specialized defense training were held in the Vocational High School and Junior College, at the Trade Division in an old converted factory at State and Market Streets, in the Spreckels Theater Building on Broadway, and in the Ford Building in Balboa Park. National Defense classes, financed entirely by the Federal Government, were developed to include training in aircraft welding, fabric covering, sheetmetal, electric welding, power sewing, aircraft engines, aircraft mechanics, machine shop, tool and die making, and radio and parachute making. Approximately 35,000 defense workers were trained in the school year 1941-42 alone. Space does not permit mention of the many special war training programs developed by the City Schools in cooperation with industry and the armed forces.

● ***The Curriculum Adapts to A War Economy***

During the 1942-43 year revised course of study outlines were written in all major subject areas. These were necessitated by rapidly changing war-time conditions. Because of renewed emphasis on mathematics, science and vocational training, new methods and content were introduced in these courses. New classes in aviation education were developed. Since thousands of high school boys were anxious to complete requirements for graduation before enlisting in the armed services, an accelerated program was set up concentrating on the basic required subjects, and utilizing summer sessions. Because of the need for additional laborers to replace those in the armed forces, many high school boys and girls took jobs during the school year on a 4-4 plan, four hours schooling and four hours in employment.

● ***Problems on the Home Front***

The war years increased the need for counseling and guidance services in the schools. Many teen-age boys, planning early induction in the armed forces, lost interest in their school studies and preferred fun and excitement. It was indeed a problem for parents, school authorities and community leaders to combat this attitude and to keep youth working toward worthy goals. Many children and youth in homes with older brothers and fathers in service and with working mothers were confused and often in trouble at school and in the community. School counselors worked overtime giving personal advice, arranging courses of study, helping to find employment and encouraging worthwhile out-of-school activities for pupils.

The problem of maintaining an adequate teaching and non-teaching staff during war years became increasingly difficult as men volunteered and were called into service. Many women teachers resigned to be with their husbands while in service.

● ***Classrooms on Wheels***

The rapid expansion of the city's population during the war years due to defense workers and military personnel was reflected in the schools. Construction of new schools could not keep pace with the soaring enrollments. During the early 1940's the San Diego Unified School District was the first in the country to build portable classrooms—well lighted, well ventilated and pleasantly designed rooms—which could

be constructed more quickly (60 to 90 days) and much more cheaply than permanent school buildings. These were not temporary, substandard structures. They were far better rooms than many in the older buildings and were designed to meet the changing needs of a mobile population. These portable rooms can be moved almost overnight to relieve the pressure of school enrollments. To date 360 portable standard classrooms have been built—a new way of life now being adopted in many school districts throughout the country.



Portable Classroom Being Moved

● ***The Post-War Years***

The cessation of hostilities in 1945 brought no return to normalcy. The high birthrate which always occurs during war years continued to remain high and the city's population continued to increase. In 1946 the citizens voted a bond issue of \$6,866,000 to build more new schools and additions to others. Another bond issue of \$11,806,000 was approved in 1950 and another of \$15,800,000 was passed in 1953. The citizens of California, during the same 7 year period, twice amended the State Constitution to provide increased state aid to local districts for educational purposes.

Because of the need to expand post-high school study opportunities for San Diego's youth, the junior college program was reorganized and expanded in 1946. Classes previously held on the campus at San Diego State College were transferred to the San Diego High School campus and designated the Applied Arts and Science Center. The Business Division of the Junior College operated at the former Lincoln School at 12th and E Streets and the Trade Division at State and Market Streets. Thus a two-year college program was developed in the three separate centers with emphasis chiefly on vocational training.

Citizens Help Build Better Schools ...

In addition to sound basic training in the 3R's, increased emphasis in recent years has been placed on the teaching of moral and spiritual values in our schools as well as the duties and responsibilities of American citizenship and the advantages of the American way of life. The advice of civic-minded citizens in initiating changes in our school system and in facing major problems is invaluable to the Board of Education members and the professional staff. In the school year 1952-1953, nearly 800 citizens volunteered to serve on 68 different school committees.



ALICE BIRNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
Typical Modern Construction

The End of the First Century ...

The first century of public schools in San Diego ended June 30, 1954, with a total school enrollment of 62,818 full-time pupils and 15,295 part-time in the school district. To provide a well-rounded educational program for these pupils required the services of 2,440 teachers, school nurses, principals, supervisors, specialists and general administrators. Also included were 841 classified (non-teaching) employees, consisting of secretaries, clerks, custodians, gardeners, maintenance crews, etc. This all required a budget of \$22,756,238 of which \$8,734,867 came from the local tax levy on real and personal property. The remainder of the funds came from State and Federal disbursements and miscellaneous sources.


At the present time the physical plant of the City Schools has a replacement value of \$50,000,000 and consists of 63 elementary schools, 7 junior high schools, 2 junior-senior high schools, 5 senior high schools, a junior college, 5 evening high schools, a continuation high school, a vocational school, an administrative and service center and a warehouse. Several new schools are under construction. What a far cry this is from the little rented schoolroom on Calhoun Street in Old Town and the one teacher employed 100 years ago in August 1854.

Despite the many difficulties and emergencies weathered by the schools during the last 100 years, children and youth in San Diego have been provided with the kind of educational program that met the needs of the times. The problems of the last two decades have been particularly severe. Much of the credit for the stability and sound growth of the public school system during this period is due to the administrative leadership of Dr. Will C. Crawford who served as Superintendent of Schools for 19½ years (July 1, 1934, to February 1, 1954).

The present public school system of San Diego is also a tribute to the members of the Board of Education who, over the years, have served long and faithfully in an effort to finance the schools and to set the policies for their management. The name of Orton E. Darnall will long be remembered for his 22 years of continuous service on the Board of Education. Judge Jacob Weinberger served for 21 years, as has Mrs. Mildred L. Hale, present President of the Board.

In conclusion, proper recognition must also be given to the thousands of civic-minded citizens who have worked actively for better public schools in San Diego so that children, in the true American tradition, may enjoy better educational opportunities than were available to their parents.

We Face the Second Century ...



With the prospect of providing additional classrooms and qualified teachers for a constantly increasing school enrollment, continued growth of the public school system in San Diego can no longer be considered an emergency. Instead, it must be looked upon as a normal condition.

The schools, in cooperation with the home, church and various character-building agencies, have a tremendous task in helping to train today's children and youth to achieve their rightful place and to accept their adult responsibilities in the world. President Eisenhower emphasized this truth when he said "Our school system is more important than it was before, because the job of being an American citizen is more complex than ever before in our history. Knowledge and understanding and wisdom, beyond the demands of yesterday, are required of tomorrow's citizens."

To do the right kind of a job with children and youth, a public school system must be guided by a set of worthy goals which are accepted and translated into action by every teacher and administrator. These goals are listed in the **Curriculum Guides** of the City Schools under the heading "This We Believe." They are achieved not only in the classrooms but in all school-directed activities such as field trips, sports, dramatics, club activities, assembly programs and the like.

These Are Our Goals:



TO TEACH THE BASIC SKILLS which are necessary to enable all citizens, within the limits of human variation, to speak, to read and to write effectively, and to calculate accurately.



TO BUILD GOOD AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP through the teaching of American history and civics and by providing activities and an environment whereby pupils can learn democracy and the American way of life by practicing it.



TO PRODUCE CRITICAL THINKERS who are so necessary to the continued success of our democracy. Since the present war of ideologies is a struggle for the minds of men, America must continue to produce alert citizens who have not only acquired factual knowledge, but have the ability to analyze facts, weigh evidence, resist destructive propaganda and form intelligent opinions.



TO PROVIDE VOCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL to improve the economic efficiency of pupils in the world of jobs and to help them to appreciate the nature of our free enterprise system and the personal satisfaction of good workmanship.



TO BUILD GOOD HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS by teaching the basic principles of successful family life and by developing in every pupil a set of sound moral and spiritual values, in keeping with American ideals, which will result in intelligent, responsible and wholesome behavior.



TO DEVELOP GOOD PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH by means of health and safety instruction and by providing physical education activities for all children and youth—group games and competitive sports—to instill the joy of participation and to provide wholesome recreation in adult life.



TO DEVELOP AN APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY in literature, art, drama, music and nature with an end toward the profitable use of leisure time.

