

Indian Creek School District

Indian Creek, near Douglas City, was an old quartz mining camp situated on a creek of the same name in Wintu ancestral territory.¹ The school opened sometime between 1871 and 1875.² It was receiving apportionments through the county in 1875.³

In 1883, Jessie Davidson was teaching at the school for \$60 per month for the spring term of four months. All the students were in the second grade, although there is no record of how many were enrolled.⁴ Jessie was also teaching in the spring of 1884, teaching 22 students whose progress was only recorded as “fair” in all subjects.⁵ The following school year started with 18 students, but only 11 were present at the time of an official visit by the Trinity County Office of Education. By now, Jessie, who was still teaching at Indian Creek, had

two and one-half years of experience. By the spring of 1885, Jessie had 26 students enrolled, but only 18 were present at the time of the visit on March 6. However, the students’ progress had improved.⁶



Top row from left: Mary Mamie Williams (Griffith), Mary Wallace Coombs. Others are unknown, 1896, Indian Creek School.

In the fall of 1891 and the spring of 1892, Indian Creek School warrants show that the school made regular \$70 payments to Isabel Richmond. As this was the going rate for a teacher’s salary at the time, we can assume that Isabel Richmond was the teacher there that school year. Using the same logic, the beginning of the next school year saw Lillian Harvey as the teacher at Indian Creek,⁷ but by June 8, 1893, the teacher changed again and was now D. Davidson who had one year of teaching experience. The length of the school term increased to eight months, and enrollment increased to 44. However, attendance appeared to be low as 16 students were missing on the day of the official visit. These students were split between seven in first grade and 21 in second grade, which adds up to only 28 in total. This total does not count the missing students, which seems to indicate they had not attended for some time.⁸

In the fall of 1895, Miss Daisy Davidson was the teacher and received the same salary as the teachers above. She had 29 students enrolled with an average attendance of 19.⁹ She was still teaching in 1896. That year, an article in the local paper indicated that she had returned from a trip that took several months in order to visit her original home in Vermont.¹⁰ It was also reported that she had an experience during her trip to the East. She was a passenger on the train that was robbed in Montana near the Dakota line. She was sitting in a seat close to the door when it was opened by a masked man holding two loaded revolvers, one of which was pointed directly at her head. At his orders, she gave him the money she had in her pocket. Thankfully, he didn’t take her watch or

¹ *History and Happenings*, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/?currentPage=2>. Accessed June 26, 2021.

² Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College. 25.

³ Bragdon, H. H., “School Money” *The Trinity Journal*, January 1, 1875.

⁴ *Superintendent’s Record*, The History Center, Trinity County Historical Society, 1883.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1884.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1885.

⁷ *Warrant Records*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

⁸ *Superintendent’s Record*, The History Center, Trinity County Historical Society, 1893.

⁹ “Our Public Schools. Teachers, Clerks and other Matters of Interest”, *The Trinity Journal*, August 17, 1895.

¹⁰ “Local Brevities”. *The Trinity Journal*, March 7, 1896.

jewelry, although he took everything of value from the men on the train. Other robbers looted the other cars and made a “fair haul.” There was no resistance from the passengers. Miss Davidson survived her journey and was able to return to teaching at Indian Creek during the spring term of 1896.¹¹

The 1896-97 school year began on July 20, 1896, with Miss Flora Woodbury as the teacher. She closed the school for the long winter break on November 6, 1896.¹² In the fall of 1897, the teacher was Bessie Coady who closed the school for the winter break on November 12.¹³ In 1899, the school site was relocated, and a “commodious, well-ventilated school house” was constructed.

The enterprising trustees devised means to furnish the room with the patented single desk, and the building when painted and complete will be one of the best equipped and most attractive school rooms in the County.¹⁴

The school was in operation in 1900 when the County Superintendent of Schools, Lizzie H. Fox, made an official visit to the district on April 19th of that year. Mr. J. F. McKnight was the teacher at that time. His salary was \$65 a



Indian Creek School. Back: Henry Rogers, Palmera Joseph, Margaret Rogers, Adaline Williams Rogers. Middle: Lenore Rogers (Brady), Victoria Joseph, Pat Rogers, Manuel Joseph. Front: Alice Williams (Goodyear), Roger Williams, Martin Rogers, James Dedrick. Courtesy of the Trinity County Historical Society.

¹¹ “An Exciting Experience” and “Schools Open”, *The Trinity Journal*, March 14, 1896.

¹² *The Trinity Journal*, August 1, 1896 and November 14, 1896.

¹³ Fox, Lizzie H., “Districts, Clerks and Teachers”, *The Trinity Journal*, October 2, 1897 and “School Notes”, November 11, 1897.

¹⁴ Fox, Lizzie H., “Our Public School. Their Progress for the Past Year Has Been Gratifying”, *The Trinity Journal*, September 9, 1899.

month. He taught 30 students, mostly primary grades. Their “Order and Attention” were determined to be “Good,” and so was the condition of the school buildings and grounds.¹⁵ In 1901, the teacher was Miss Bertha E. Post, who opened the school in March for the spring term.¹⁶ In the spring of 1904, the teacher was Annie I. Fox, younger sister to Lizzie H. Fox, who opened the spring term on March 7.¹⁷ Other early teachers in the district included Miss Josie Kenrick, Fall term 1904 and fall of 1905, who made \$65 per month;¹⁸ Miss Nettie Armistead, 1908¹⁹; Miss Ruby A. Ordway of Chico, Spring term 1909; Miss May McArthur, Fall term 1909;²⁰ Miss M. Riley of Gridley, Spring and Fall 1910 with 16 students;²¹ Miss Agnes R. Dedrick, Spring 1911; Miss Fay Little of Biggs, Fall term, 1912 and Spring term, 1913.²² Clearly, the teacher turnover rate in the early days of education in Trinity County was high.

On September 9, 1913, the school was temporarily suspended due to the lack of attendance by students. However, the district was quickly re-established a year later.²³

On September 11, 1920, Indian Creek School District lapsed along with several other districts in the county that year.²⁴ Interestingly, the local paper reports in 1925 that the Indian school district was formed out of a part of the Hayfork Valley Union and Douglas City school districts²⁵, and sure enough, the district shows up again in the school records in the 1924-25 school year and is listed as “new.”²⁶ It was “temporarily suspended” (again) in the 1928-29 school year and lapsed (closed) on July 20, 1929 for the last time.²⁷

The former Indian Creek schoolhouse still exists in 2022 but has been moved to a new location.²⁸

See also **Lewiston School District.**

¹⁵ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 119.

¹⁶ “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, March 23, 1901.

¹⁷ “Schools Closed”, *The Trinity Journal*, June 6, 1904.

¹⁸ “Schools Open”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 29, 1905; and “Districts, Clerks, Teachers, Trinity County, 1904-1905”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.

¹⁹ “Schools Closed”, *The Trinity Journal*, June 27, 1908.

²⁰ “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 3, 1909, and November 27, 1909.

²¹ “Indian Creek School Report”, *The Trinity Journal*, June 7, 1910.

²² “Local Brevities”, *The Trinity Journal*, March 3, 1911, April 9, 1910, December 17, 1910, August 8, 1912, and June 14, 1913.

²³ “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, September 9, 1913, and September 19, 1914.

²⁴ “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1920-21, 12.

²⁵ “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 17, 1925.

²⁶ “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1924-25, 12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1928-29 and 1929-30, 7; and “Board of Supervisors”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 20, 1929.

²⁸ Supahan, Sarah, discussion with Jim French, retired Trinity County Superintendent of Schools, January 2, 2022.