

Ruch's School District

Ruch's School (pronounced in German with "Ru" as in "Roost" with a gargled "ch" at the end) was located on Summit Creek in the Hayfork Valley, on the upper end of the Michael Ruch Ranch. Presumably, this was the property of the Trinity County Superintendent of Schools, M. Ruch, who held that elected position from 1857 to 1860. The post office address given for the school at the time was Wildwood.¹

In 1885, the Ruch district was officially formed out of the "Hay Fork" district by order of the Board of Supervisors:

"...By the first section line East of Big Creek running North and South and that the part of said District so divided, on the East side of said section line will be established and known as Ruch's School District".²

Ruch's School District was also noted on a list of district apportionments (state funding) in March of 1886.³ Likewise, the school was recorded in the County Superintendent's visiting records the same year. In May of 1886, the school was visited when Mertie Jordan was the teacher. The teachers' salary was only \$50, much less than other schools at the time. The number of students enrolled was eleven. Just three months later, another visit occurred in August 1886. Mertie Jordan was still the teacher, and the school term was six months long. Only seven students were enrolled, and they were all in the second grade. Their order and attention were rated as "good," but their academic skills were reported as only "fair."⁴ The student enrollment at Ruch District jumped to 30 students in 1888 and was only slightly reduced by 1894 to 24 students when the school was under the direction of G. M. Irving.⁵

According to an article in the local paper in November 1895, teacher Celia M. Weinheimer "closed another successful term of school in the Ruch's district." The "term" lasted only one month. She was paid \$65 and taught 12 students. Miss Weinheimer actually began at Ruch a year before (fall of 1894) when she took over for another teacher who left for Colorado.⁶ Celia was a local who had attended Weaverville Grammar School as a child and had taught in many different schools in the county.⁷



Ruch School, Hayfork, 1915-16. The school was located on the James E. Dockery, Sr.'s Ranch close to the turn-off to Summit Creek from main Highway 3. Margaret Rodgers Trimble was the teacher and she took this picture. The Ruch School children in the photo are, sitting left to right: Wesley Trimble, Wynn Moser, Norman Trimble and Blanch Moser Eslick. Standing, left to right: Lola McKenzie Lung, Marion Morris, Reggie Morris, Newton Shock, Marie Dockery Stedman, Roger Williams, Maggie Britton Donnelly, Marjorie Trimble and Pansy Morris Zachary. (Marie Dockery Stedman Collection)

— This photo was published in the Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook, 1982, 54.

¹ *School District Disbursements & Receipts, Ruch District information*, Historical Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

² "Board of Supervisors", *The Trinity Journal*, August 8, 1885.

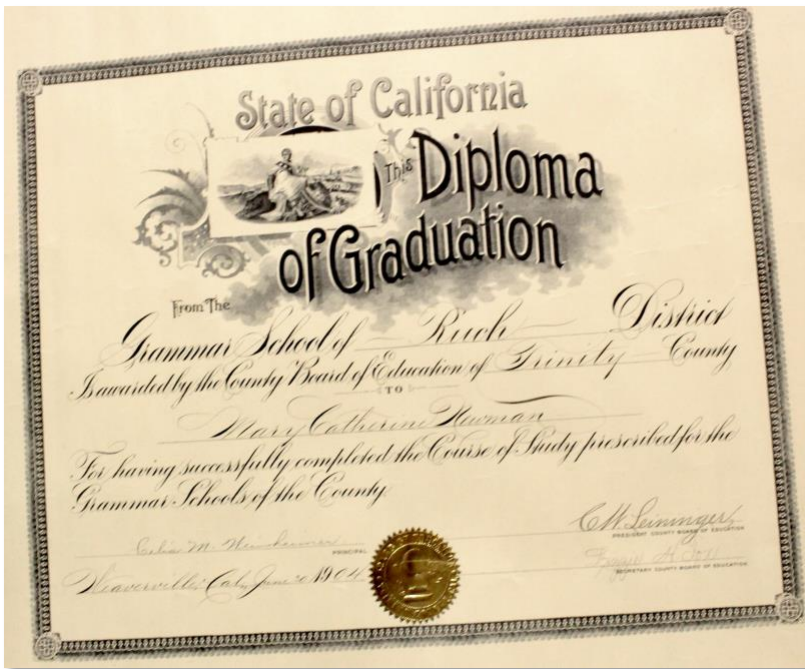
³ "Apportionment of State School Money", *The Trinity Journal*, March 3, 1886.

⁴ "Superintendent's Record", The History Center, Trinity County Historical Society.

⁵ "Superintendent's Record", The History Center, Trinity County Historical Society.

⁶ "Personal Mentionings", *The Trinity Journal*, November 3, 1884.

⁷ Information from the reverse of a photo of Ruch School and students, 1893, Historical Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.



In April of 1896, it was reported that the school had a larger attendance during that school year than the year before, although the number of students was not noted. However, the students were making “very favorable progress”.⁸ Miss Weinheimer closed the school for the summer after a four-month term on June 25, 1896.⁹

In August 1896, Miss Weinheimer was still employed as the teacher and began the fall term of the 1896-97 school year. She’s also mentioned as having taught there in June 1902, 1903 (13 students enrolled), and December 1904 for \$65 per month.¹⁰ It’s said that the students had excellent attendance and highly satisfactory progress in their studies under this teacher¹¹. For all we know, Miss Weinheimer could have been teaching there throughout the

entire period of 1894-1904, even though this was an unusual occurrence at the time in other areas of the county where a much greater turnover in teaching staff often occurred.

By 1898, the “apostrophe s” was dropped from the school’s name (“Ruch’s”), and the school was known simply as “Ruch.”

In 1909, Ruch School students, under the direction of teacher Grace Lippincott, “gave a very pleasing entertaining Friday evening, November 5th, at the school house”. The local paper went on to describe the event this way: “The school room was decorated with flags and evergreens and looked very artistic.” The program consisted of a selection of songs sung by different students and at least two adults, including “When I’m a Man,” “Little Jack.” There was also a “Dialogue” titled “Stealin’ Chickens.” The evening ended with a spelling match in which all present were included “which created much mirth.” It was noted that the public was invited, and many were in attendance despite the fact that there were only six children in the school.¹²

Ruch School District received a portion of the Wildwood School District territory in July 1912 when that school Lapsed. Ruch shared the divided territory with Salt Creek School District.

In May 1913, the local paper advertised a dance at “Kellogg’s Hall” to raise funds for a new schoolhouse. The \$2.50 tickets included a chicken supper. The paper demanded, “Everybody turn out and help a good cause.”¹³

Ruch School, along with Hayfork and “other valley schools,” provided “an entertainment” to raise funds to purchase a phonograph for the joint use of the four schools (these included at least Tule Creek, Salt Creek, as well as Ruch School Districts). The program consisted of songs and recitations by the students of each school, and it was “very well rendered.” The second portion of the program was a geographical contest by the students. Outlines of the states were “thrown upon a screen by a radioptican,” and each child wrote down the names of

⁸ “Hay Fork Locals”, *The Trinity Journal*, April 4, 1896.

⁹ “Hay Fork Locals”, *The Trinity Journal*, July 4, 1896.

¹⁰ “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, December 10, 1904; and “Districts, Clerks, Teachers, Trinity County, 1904-1905”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.

¹¹ “School Notes”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 7, 1903.

¹² “School Entertainment”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 13, 1909.

¹³ “Ruch School Dance”, *The Trinity Journal*, May 3, 1913.

the states as they appeared. Two students, Wilma Shock and Genevieve Albiez of Hayfork school, were successful contestants, having guessed each state correctly. Lola McKinzie of Ruch School received special recognition, having only missed one. At the end of the program, refreshments were sold “and some time [was spent] in social chat.” The event was “voted a success socially and financially” as it raised \$18.25.¹⁴

The Ruch School District and two other small school districts merged with Hayfork Valley Union School District in 1918.¹⁵ The Ruch Schoolhouse's destruction by fire in 1916 could have helped facilitate this merger.¹⁶ However, the Hayfork schoolhouse was seven miles away. Even though a man by the name of John “Reggie” Morris, Jr. drove (by horse buggy) many children to the Hayfork school from the Ruch area, it was still a long trip. In addition, the Hayfork Schoolhouse that they were taken to was overcrowded and in poor condition.¹⁷



In January 1925, ten or more “heads of families” residing in the Hayfork School District and the Ruch School area petitioned the Superintendent of Schools for another boundary change, which was approved.¹⁸ It is unclear what change occurred since all through the 1920s, 1930s, and beyond, Ruch is listed as a school under the umbrella of the Hayfork Union School District in the annual educational reports. The local paper noted that the Ruch School



Ruch School District, 1893, pictured are Laura (Pet) Halley, Finnis (or Tinnis) Jordan, Flora Barker, Mabel Goering (teacher, seated), Mary (Matie) Newman (Jenkins) (seated in front of the teacher), Florence Grigsby (Walker), Margaret “Maggie” Hughes (Harris), Mary Barker, and Maud Halley

“District” was temporarily suspended, having less than five students for the school year ending that same year on June 30, 1925. But by August, a petition from the superintendent of schools and the Hayfork Valley Union School District asked that Ruch “District” be re-established, which it was by order of the Board of Supervisors. The only guess that can be made here is that Ruch School was never actually reestablished as a separate district from Hayfork Valley Union, but since 1925, it was a separate school site, likely because parents didn’t want their children traveling seven miles from

¹⁴ “Hayfork Items”, *The Trinity Journal*, November 20, 1915.

¹⁵ *School District Disbursements & Receipts, Ruch District information*, Historical Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

¹⁶ “In the Local Field”, *The Trinity Journal*, September 23, 1916.

¹⁷ “Hayfork Children Now Ride to School”, *The Trinity Journal*, October 5, 1918.

¹⁸ “County Supervisors in Regular Session”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 17, 1925.

their homes to the Hayfork Valley Union's schoolhouse. The newspaper's terminology likely was in error, not distinguishing correctly between a "school" and a "district," which was fairly common.

The fact that Ruch was functioning as a school within a larger district means that few records for that school still exist since official records usually only chronicled school districts.

The known Ruch teachers from the early days of the school include the following. Some teachers only taught for one term (fall or spring) and, therefore, may have shared a school year with another teacher:

Mertie Jordan (1885-1887)

Ann Aldersley and Winnie Blakemore (1891-1892)¹⁹

Mabel Goering (1894), as seen in the photos in this document,²⁰ and G. M. Irving²¹

Celia Weinheimer (1894-1904)

Miss Nellie Hennessey (1907)²²

Mr. Earl Leach (1908)²³

Miss Jennie M. Counts (1909)²⁴ and Grace Lippincott²⁵

Miss Gracia O'Bryan (1910-11)²⁶

Agnes R. Dedrick (1913)²⁷

Maud M. Crews (1914)²⁸

Miss Margaret Rogers (1915-1916)²⁹

See also **Hayfork Valley Union School District.**

¹⁹ "Teachers Employed in Trinity County", The History Center, Trinity County Historical Society, 82.

²⁰ Information from the reverse of a photo of Ruch School and students, 1893, Historical Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education.

²¹ "Superintendent's Record", The History Center, Trinity County Historical Society.

²² *Sacramento Daily Union*, August 27, 1907.

²³ "Schools Opened", *The Trinity Journal*, August 15, 1908.

²⁴ "School Notes", *The Trinity Journal*, February 27, 1909.

²⁵ "School Entertainment", *The Trinity Journal*, November 13, 1909.

²⁶ "Hayfork Doings", *The Trinity Journal*, September 9, 1911.

²⁷ "Local Brevities", *The Trinity Journal*, March 8, 1913.

²⁸ "Hayfork Items", *The Trinity Journal*, March 14, 1914.

²⁹ "Schools, Districts, Teachers and Clerks", *The Trinity Journal*, October 2, 1915; and "Hayfork Items", *The Trinity Journal*, March 11, 1916.

RUCH DISTRICT (Of Hayfork Valley Union)

Beginning at the corner common to Sections 3, 4, 9 and 10,
T32N, R11W, M.D.M.; and running thence,

Southeasterly to the SE corner of Section 10, T32N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

East and along the section line to the NE corner of Section 13, T32N,
R11W, M.D.M., thence,

Southeasterly to the 1/4 section corner between Sections 28 and 29,
T32N, R10W, M.D.M.; thence

South and along the section line to the SE corner of Section 32,
T32N, R10W, M.D.M., thence

East and along the section line to the NE corner of Section 3,
T31N, R10W, M.D.M.; thence

South and along the section line to the SE corner of Section 15,
T31N, R10W, M.D.M.; thence

East and along the section line to the NE corner of Section 22,
T31N, R9W, M.D.M.; thence

South and along the section line to the SE corner of Section 34, T31N,
R9W, M.D.M.; thence

East and along the section line to the NE corner of Section 3,
T30N, R9W, M.D.M.; thence

South and along the section line to the East boundary line of Trinity
County on the East line of Section 3, T30N, R9W, M.D.M.; thence

Southwesterly and following along the boundary line between Trinity
and Shasta Counties to a point on the East line of Section 28, T30N,
R10W, M.D.M.; thence

North and along the section line to the NE corner of Section 21,
T30N, R10W, M.D.M.; thence

West and along the section line to the SW corner of Section 15,
T30N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

North and along the section line to the NW corner of Section 10,
T30N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

Northwesterly to the NW corner of Section 4, T30N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

West and along the section line to the SW corner of Section 33, T31N,
R11W, M.D.M.; thence

North and along the section line to the NW corner of Section 21,
T31N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

West and along the section line to the SW corner of Section 18,
T31N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

North and along the section line to the NW corner of Section 30,
T32N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

East and along the section line to the SE corner of Section 19
T32N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

North and along the section line to the NW corner of Section 17,
T32N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

Northeasterly to the 1/4 section corner between Sections 3 and
4, T32N, R11W, M.D.M.; thence

South and along the section line to the place of beginning