

Wildwood School District

In the record of official school district visits, located at Trinity County Office of Education, it is noted that the district was established on January 10, 1898, and indeed the County Superintendent of Schools visited the district on October 13th of that year. At the time of the visit, the school was taught by Miss Mary M. Hygelund who made \$60 per month and had 20 pupils enrolled, although only 9 were present at the time of the visit.¹ The Wildwood School is presumably located in Wildwood just east of Post Mountain off State Highway 36 in Wintu ancestral territory. The Wildwood School District was created by order of the Board of Supervisors who acted as the County Board of Education at that time in history. It opened along with the Cinnabar and the Mad River School Districts.²



Before its official opening, Wildwood was likely functioning as a private school as there is a record of Cecilia Weinheimer leaving the North Fork School (Helena) in 1893 when her fiancé was killed in a mining accident, to start working at Wildwood because the school needed a teacher at that time.³ Wildwood School was just one of the many schools in which Cecilia taught in Trinity County.

In 1901, Miss Mary M. Hygeland opened the Wildwood School on Monday, April 22 for the beginning of the spring term and she continued teaching into the fall term which began in July.⁴ The school

was receiving public money that year just as it was in 1900.⁵ In 1902, the teacher at Wildwood School was Miss Emilie Meckel for both the spring and fall terms.⁶ That year there was also an election for board members and Mrs. Wilson was elected to the Wildwood Board of Trustees, thereby ensuring that the school was still a public school at that time.⁷

By the spring of 1903, the teacher at Wildwood was Myrtle Birch who was substituting for Miss Martha Rowley of Cottonwood.⁸ Miss Kathryn Parker was the teacher in the fall of 1903. She had 17 students enrolled for the term and the students were reported as being "attentive, and [they] manifest much interest in the good work accomplished".⁹ In 1904, the school was being taught by Miss Clara B. Garoutte for \$65 per month. In 1905, Miss Margaret Strouse began the school year teaching at Wildwood School in August. Miss Beatrice June Johnson, of Redbluff, was mentioned in the local paper as having opened the spring terms of 1906, and 1907 at Wildwood, as well as the fall term of 1907 on, believe it or not, July 1st.¹⁰

¹ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 85.

² "Board of Supervisors", *The Trinity Journal*, January 20, 1898.

³ Morris, Florence, "Auntie Cee, Biography of a Trinity Schoolteacher, Cecilia Weinheimer", *Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook*, 1967, 51-53.

⁴ "Local Brevities", *The Trinity Journal*, April 27, 1901, and July 13, 1901.

⁵ "Apportionment of School Monday", *The Trinity Journal*, June 2, 1900.

⁶ "Schools Closed", *The Trinity Journal*, June 28, 1902 and "School Notes", November 1, 1902.

⁷ "Election of School Trustees", *The Trinity Journal*, May 31, 1902.

⁸ "Schools Closed", *The Trinity Journal*, June 27, 1903; "Apportionment of School Money", May 30, 1903; and "School Notes", March 21, 1903.

⁹ "School Notes", *The Trinity Journal*, November 7, 1903.

¹⁰ "School Notes", *The Trinity Journal*, April 20, 1907; "Schools Opened", July 27, 1907; and "Local Brevities", November 9, 1907, and "Districts, Clerks, Teachers, Trinity County, 1904-1905", *The Trinity Journal*, November 5, 1904.

In 1908, Miss Flora Cotterill was teaching at the Wildwood School District and closed the spring term.¹¹ In 1909, Miss Nina L. Tipton was to open the spring term of the school on April 19.¹² However, Wildwood School was suspended just three months later in July of 1909 by County Superintendent of Schools, Nellie M. Jordan, due to an average daily attendance of fewer than five children during the 1908-09 school year.¹³ The results of a school census were reported in May of 1909 and it counted only 13 children in the Wildwood area with only 6 of those between the ages of 5 and 17 (i.e.: school age).¹⁴

Following that time, not much mention is made of Wildwood School in the local paper except that we know it received apportionments on January 5, and May 29, 1910,¹⁵ and that it was used frequently as a polling place in 1910 - 1912 for various elections.

On July 7, 1912, Wildwood School was lapsed (closed) having previously been suspended. At this time, a portion of the school district's territory was attached to Ruch School District and another portion to Salt Creek School District, while all of the furnishings and supplies were sent to the Tule Creek School District.¹⁶

In other records, Wildwood School was noted as being "new" again in 1929-30.¹⁷ Perhaps it had reopened. There is no record found yet to explain this anomaly. Beginning in the 1933-34 school year and continuing until 1941, Wildwood School District was listed as "Wildwood-Knob". It's not clear if this was a name change or just a notation about the specific location of the school (in 1935-36 the Post Office Box is listed as being "Knob"). In 1939-40, Wildwood-Knob was suspended. Intriguingly, Wildwood-Knob was still suspended the next year while a "Wildwood Emergency School, Knob" was created. Any and all Wildwood Schools lapsed in 1941-42.

Wildwood School had to have been open again because in 1951 it's noted, in other sources, that a new building for the school was constructed that year. An additional room was added in the spring of 1955. In 1956 there were 50 children enrolled with Mrs. Winifred Bridge and Mr. Wesley George as teachers.¹⁸ By 1955 the school was absorbed into the Hayfork Valley Union School District which operated it, among others.¹⁹ In 1969 there were 37 students at the Wildwood School and in 1970 the student population was reduced to 24.²⁰ It is not known at this time when the school was closed for the last time, but the school no longer exists.



Wildwood about 1899

¹¹ "Schools Closed", *The Trinity Journal*, June 27, 1908.

¹² "Local Brevities", *The Trinity Journal*, April 10, 1909.

¹³ "School Districts Suspended", *The Trinity Journal*, July 24, 1909.

¹⁴ "School Census", *The Trinity Journal*, May 22, 1909.

¹⁵ "Apportionment of School Money", *The Trinity Journal*, January 8, 1910 and June 11, 1910.

¹⁶ "Supervisors' Proceedings", *The Trinity Journal*, July 13, 1912.

¹⁷ "Statistics of Elementary Schools", *Annual Reports*, Historic Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1929-30, 2.

¹⁸ "A Short History of the Schools in Trinity County" *The Trinity Journal*, 1956, 4, (NOTE: This was obtained from the Trinity County Historical Society; may also have been published as

"Trinity County Schools Growing With California", Printed in the *Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition).

¹⁹ "Trinity County Schools Growing With California", *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition.

²⁰ "County Schools Enrollment Shows Little Change", *Trinity County School Bulletin*, October 1970.