

La Grange School District

La Grange School was established in 1912. The name “La Grange” is French for “the farm”. La Grange School, built in 1911-1918, was located at the La Grange Mine on Oregon Mountain, in Wintu ancestral territory, across from the “Giant”.¹ The “Giant” was the name of the large water cannon that could shoot water out of a huge nozzle, sized to nine inches in diameter, to help move dirt.² Sometimes whole mountainsides could be washed away by the power of these giants.³ The school was said to be specifically located, “right on the old road by where the boarding house was”.⁴



The La Grange Hydraulic mine, four miles northwest of Weaverville, was said to have once been one of the most important mines in the state, and by 1915, (at that time called the “Ward and Trinity” mine) was reported to be the largest hydraulic mine in the world in active operation.⁵

One source said the mine was opened in 1851 and closed during the First World War.⁶ In other information, the mine first operated in about 1862 under a different name, “The Oregon Mountain Group of Claims”. In 1892 it was purchased by the La Grange Hydraulic Gold Mining Company, whose president was Baron E. de La Grange⁷ and which was to have ceased operations in 1918.⁸ The different dates of operation likely stem from the different owners and different names of the mine.

Given the large mining operation, it’s no wonder that a school needed to be built for the children of the miners.

In 1912, the school of 16 students was taught by Katie Weinheimer, a very experienced teacher having taught for more than ten years with 12 months in the La Grange District itself. She was paid \$80 per month, but the school badly needed a library as the number of books at the school was limited. She continued to teach at La Grange at least through May of 1913.⁹ Rather than walking to the school

each day like she had done when she taught at previous schools, Katie purchased a bay horse, “a bronco” for transportation. During good weather, she rode horseback from “Weaver” (the town of Weaverville). Her nephew remembers her looking “smart” riding with a divided khaki skirt, tailored shirt-waist, and a straw or soft khaki hat covering her dark red upswept Gibson girl hair. She also wore riding gloves with crossed buggy whips embroidered on the gauntlets.¹⁰

¹ Karen, Marian, Information located in historical files, Trinity County Office of Education

² “La Grange Mine... A Picture Tour”, *Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook*, 1969, 33 - 35.

³ “Shasta-Trinity National Forests Trinity Heritage National Scenic Byway. A Self Guided Auto Tour” map, US Department of Agriculture. No date.

⁴ Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College,

⁵ “History and Happenings”, Southwest Shasta County Historical Group, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/?currentPage=2>, Accessed June 26, 2021; and “La Grange Mine” <https://visitttrinity.com/history/mining/la-grange-mine/>, accessed November 18, 2022 and Diller, J. S., “Auriferous Gravels in the Weaverville Quadrangle, California”, *Gold and Silver*, 1912, 11.

⁶ Kyle, Douglas, *Historic Spots in California*, Stanford University Press, 380.

⁷ “The News Back Then” for June 27, 1896, *The Trinity Journal*, June 30, 2021, 17.

⁸ “California Historical Landmarks in Trinity County; California Historical Landmark 778”, <https://noehill.com/trinity/cal0778.asp>. Accessed June 26, 2021; and the plaque found on Oregon Mountain, Trinity County.

⁹ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 437 and 449.

¹⁰ Morris, Florence, “Auntie Cee Biography of a Trinity Schoolteacher, Cecilia Weinheimer”, *Trinity County Historical Society Yearbook*, 1967, 51-53.

Moon Lim Lee recalls in an interview in 1971 that Pauline (Zingle) Clark had taught at La Grange, following her mother who taught there as well.¹¹ The students there had also been taught, at some point, by Mrs. Clark “for years”.¹²

In the 1919-20 school year “no school was held” as there were no longer any students to teach due to the fact that, “the mine shut down this last year and all the families departed”.¹³ The school officially lapsed (closed) during the 1920-21 school year along with several other small schools.¹⁴



La Grange School 1933



¹¹ Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 66.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “Statistics of Elementary Schools”, *Annual Reports*, Historic Documents Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 23.

¹⁴ Ibid., 12.