

The town of Island Mountain, in Lassik traditional territory, has a complicated history. A post office was originally established there when it was located in Humboldt County. It was named for nearby Island Mountain Peak, 22

miles southeast of Garberville. It was named by settlers in the 1850s with the name “island” being particularly apt because it is an area nearly isolated by water from two creeks and the Eel River which cuts across the corner of Trinity County. Due to the resistance of the rock to erosion, the Eel River makes an abrupt “S” curve around the area.¹

In 1907, the original post office was discontinued and it was moved ½ mile into Trinity County. At that point, the name was changed to Irma, for Irma Morrison who made a 25-mile trip by horseback, three times a week, to carry the mail. On August 16, 1915, the Irma Post Office was discontinued and the name changed back to Island Mountain, Trinity County, before being discontinued in 1973, with the service moved to Garberville in Humboldt County.²

According to historical records stored at the Trinity County Office of Education, Island Mountain School District was organized in 1913-14. In 1917, there were 11 students enrolled and they were taught by Velma Canfield. Her salary was

an unusually specific amount of \$62.50 per month. She had only three months total experience in teaching, yet all the students were making good or excellent progress and their “Order and Attention” was “Very Good”.³

In 1919 the teacher was Ruth Hamilton who had earned her diploma from the Humboldt State “Normal School” (a “Normal School” was an institution where teachers were trained). At this time there were only four students enrolled.⁴ The school was suspended in November 1920, likely due to too few students, but was reestablished a year later.⁵

In June of 1922, the teacher was Cyrus Friedman who earned \$120 pr month with eight students enrolled. The condition of the school building and grounds was noted as being “Satisfactory”.⁶ By August of that same year, the

¹“History and Happenings”, Southwest Shasta County Historical Group, <http://historyandhappenings.squarespace.com/trinity-county/?currentPage=2>. Accessed June 26, 2021.

² Ibid.

³ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1905-1918*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 579.

⁴ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 40.

⁵ Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 30.

⁶ *School Superintendents Record of Official Visits, 1918-1933*, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 104.

school building was reported as being “Poor” and a new building was listed as a need of the school.⁷ The same was reported in a visit on July 22, 1923.⁸

The school was suspended again on July 10, 1924, and re-established on September 10, 1925. By April of 1926, Marguerite Willson was the teacher receiving a salary of \$130 per month. Curiously, at that time six students were enrolled but seven were present on the day of the visit. The teacher was reported as being not just good but “Excellent perfect” and the students were doing well in all subject areas.⁹

In March of 1927, the teacher was Mrs. Pearl Spaulding Longwell and she taught there until the end of 1929 when Alice E. Steele took over for the new school year. There were nine students at that time and not only was the school building reported as being “Poor” but a larger building was also needed.¹⁰ Alice Steele was still teaching there in September of 1930. The condition of the building had not changed and there were only five students. The “Methods and Zeal” of Miss Steele, however, was “Very Good”.¹¹ She continued at the school through 1931 until a new teacher, Alice E Jewett, took over in the fall of 1932. Something had changed, however, since the schoolhouse was now rated as being “Good”.¹² It’s unknown at this time if a new building was built, the old building was repaired, or if the school had moved.

Island Mountain School was suspended for a third time during the 1942-43 school year.¹³

The school was held in several different locations throughout the years, but in 1953, the Northwestern Pacific Railroad on the Eel River offered a steel passenger coach to be used as both a school and a teacherage (a place for the teacher to live).¹⁴ By 1956, the school was being held at the railroad company in a train caboose for ten students.¹⁵ Mr. Edward Franklin, formerly a resident of Minersville in Trinity County, was the teacher at that

time. Trustees were Mrs. Rose Ward, Mrs. Roanna Beagle, and Mr. Carl E. Flanagan.¹⁶

The district closed for good in 1961.¹⁷ This was the “only district in the county to have a railroad running through it and, at that, only seven miles”.¹⁸



⁷ Ibid., 117.

⁸ Ibid., 143.

⁹ Ibid., 210.

¹⁰ Ibid., 295.

¹¹ Ibid., 319.

¹² Ibid., 371.

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

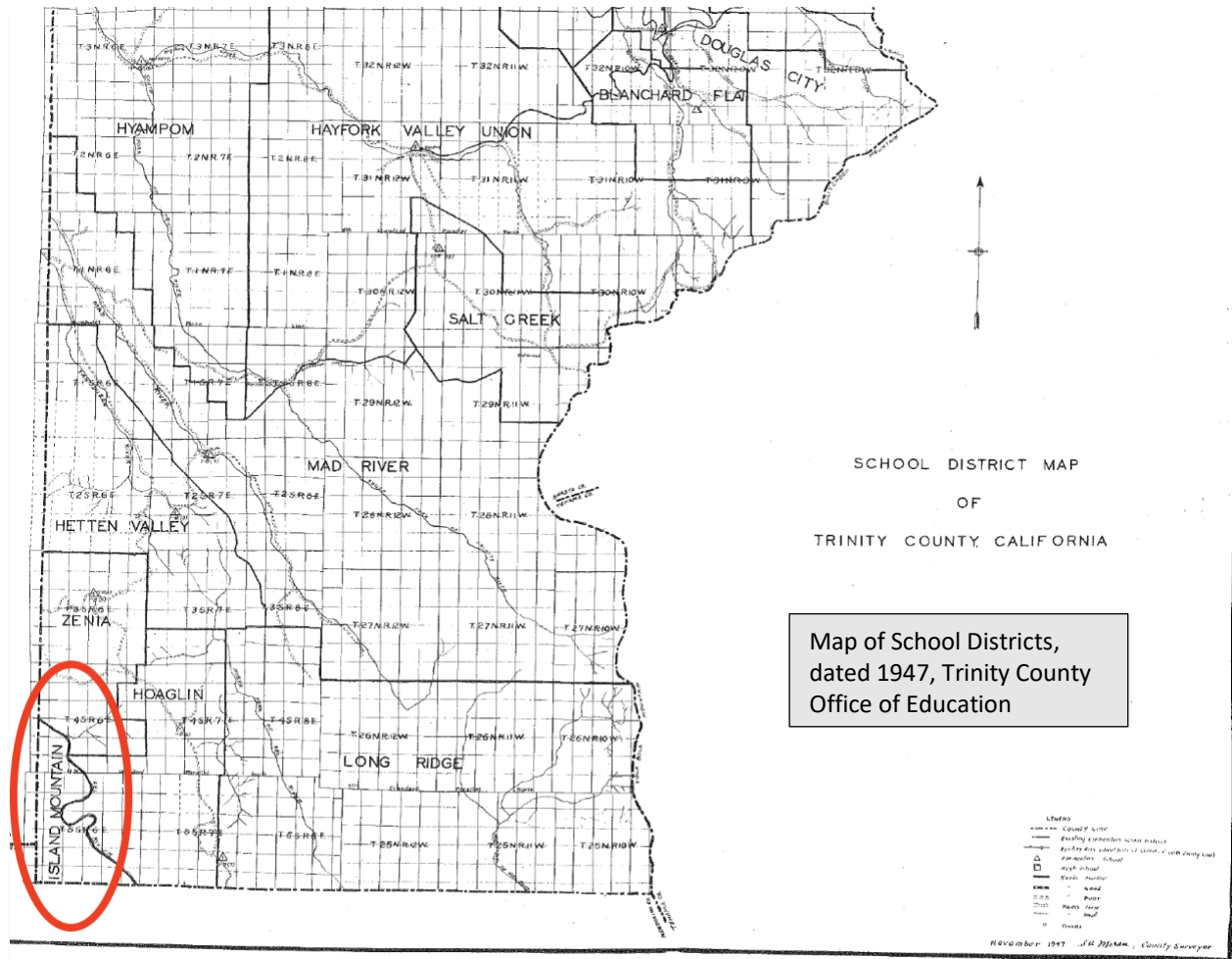
¹⁴ “Trinity County Schools Growing With California”, *The Trinity Journal*, January 28, 1956, Centennial Edition; and “A Short History of the Schools in Trinity County”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956, 5.

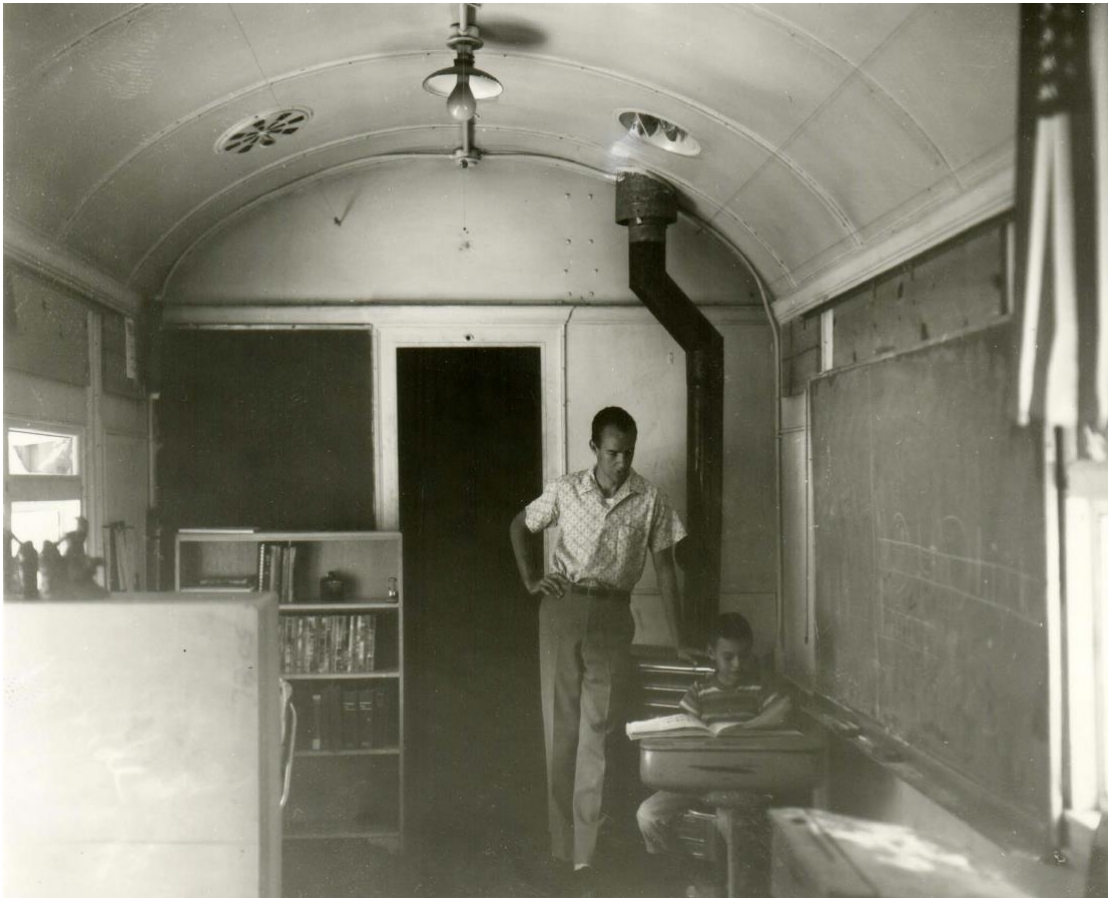
¹⁵ Supahan, Sarah, communication with Jim French, retired Trinity County Superintendent of Schools, January 1, 2022.

¹⁶ “A Short History of the Schools in Trinity County”, Historic Records Collection, Trinity County Office of Education, 1956, 5.

¹⁷ Holland, James. *A History of Education in Trinity County; A Thesis presented to the School of Education*. 1971. Chico State College, 30.

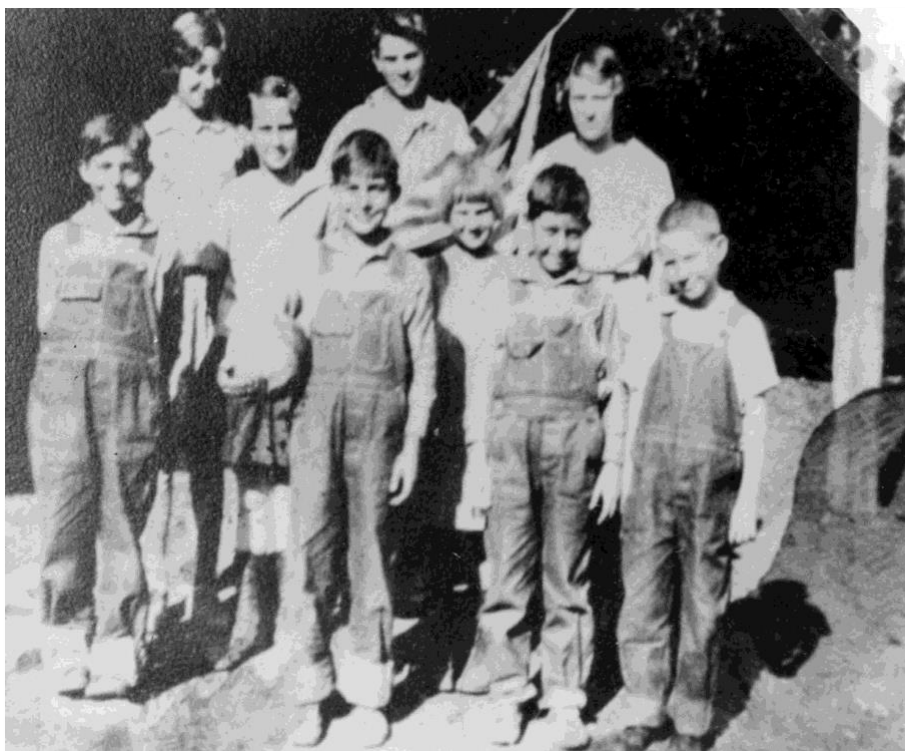
¹⁸ Ibid.





Above and below, dated 1956





Island Mountain 1931

