

VIII. Other Prominent Educators

We've already mentioned in the preceding chapter some of the outstanding educators who have enriched the local public school system over the years. In this chapter we'd like to mention a few more; however, we must emphasize that those included here represent only a small fraction of all those who deserve mention.

LILLIAN HOWARD

Although the majority of public school teachers were women, relatively few of them rose to the rank of school administrator. (It is interesting to note that of the more than 100 prominent educators in America who are listed in the World Book Encyclopedia, only 13 are women.)

Miss Lillian Howard was John Linscott's vice principal at Santa Cruz High School when he took over as principal of that school in the early 1900s--at a time when it was somewhat unusual for a woman to serve in an administrative position.

Yet she might be forgotten today if it weren't for her excellent pen and ink sketches of old Santa Cruz scenes. The current revival of interest in local history has brought Miss Howard to the fore, through her portrayals of Santa Cruz Mission ruins, Major's Mill, and redwood trees. There is something of a mystery about her: where did she come from in 1885 to teach, and where did she go when she retired in 1925? She is described as tall and stately by those who remember her. She taught art at Santa Cruz High and became its vice principal in 1897.

"She was very stern," recalls C. E. "Doc" Fehlman.

Another long-time citizen who knew her says: "She stood at the head of the stairs as students marched in to their classrooms. If she spied any commotion or horseplay, she clapped her hands and descended upon the wrong-doers with a vengeance that put fear into their souls."

"Once in a while I would drive her up to Pogonip to sketch a tree or some scene that had taken her fancy," Darrell Cardiff says. "She couldn't drive, and she was very appreciative."

"She was teaching at Santa Cruz High when my mother was a student there," recalls Alta Macaulay who is a retired, long-time Santa Cruz public school teacher herself.

When she retired, Lillian Howard left Santa Cruz, and even Doc Fehlman, with all the research and records he keeps on Santa Cruz public schools and their histories, does not know where she went.

STELLA FINKELDEY

There is a picture of Miss Stella Finkeldey in a newspaper article dated 1941. She was a stern-looking maiden lady (most of

the long-time teachers were both) with iron-gray hair pulled back into a bun and a wisp of tailored lace at her throat. She was born in Santa Cruz in 1870, the only child of a German couple. She attended Santa Cruz public schools, then went on to San Jose Normal School where she earned her teaching credential. She came back home and taught for almost 30 years before retiring in 1919. She was principal of Laurel School in Santa Cruz for 16 years.

Stella is remembered for her iron devotion to duty by all who knew her, and she should also be remembered for her gift of the very excellent Otto Kunitz music collection to Santa Cruz Public Library. Kunitz, an accomplished musician, was her cousin and died some years before she did. Stella was honored by her fellow teachers, by the American Red Cross, the Santa Cruz Woman's Club, Soroptimists, Business and Professional Women, and the Monday Music Club before she died in 1948.

EDNA SCOTT

Edna L. Scott was an exception to the rule. She was a softer, more feminine looking woman, the niece of pioneer Hiram Scott for whom Scotts Valley is named. Edna also graduated from San Jose Normal School with a teaching credential and taught at Mission Hill. She had her foibles--the main one being that she would never reveal her age. Her credential--in fact, all of her official papers--left that space blank.

Edna retired from teaching in the 1930s to care for her mother who was ill, and in 1958 Edna herself entered a nursing home. She died there exactly one week after her old family home on Walnut Avenue was demolished to make way for a parking lot.

A bronze fountain at the University of California at Santa Cruz commemorates this dedicated teacher. It was designed by a talented member of the Scott family, Nancy Genn of Berkeley, who is widely known for her sculpture. The fountain was donated to the University in Edna's memory.

LOUISE WORTHINGTON

Louise Worthington, a member of the original committee for this book on school history, made Watsonville history herself.

She served as Dean of Girls at Watsonville High School for 28 years, probably something of a record in itself.

"I attended a private school located on Kearny Street in Watsonville, then grammar school, and I graduated from Watsonville High in 1919," she says.

Louise married a World War I flier who flew with Eddie Rickenbacker overseas and was killed in action.

After the war Louise returned to Watsonville and was hired as a temporary teacher by Thomas McQuiddy. Her "temporary" status changed to fully credentialed as she took additional studies, and she served a long and distinguished career in public education.

MINTIE WHITE

In Watsonville there is an elementary school named for a teacher who once said, "I never knew a child I couldn't love."

She was Armina Allison White, better known for many years as Mintie White. The school is called Mintie White School.

Mintie Allison was born in 1850 in Redrock, Iowa, and when she was four years old her family brought her across the plains to California in a covered wagon. In telling of the journey once, she recalled that she walked much of the way.

In 1854 the family arrived near Vacaville in Sonoma County where they lived for a time, but five years later the Allisons moved to Pajaro, across the river from Watsonville.

While Mintie was attending a private school for girls she met her future husband, Professor William White, and they were

married in 1870. Following the marriage the young couple moved to San Francisco where he taught in another private school.

The Whites had two children, a son and a daughter. When the daughter was in her late teens she became very ill with tuberculosis and the family moved back to Watsonville, hoping change of climate would improve the girl's health. However, Mintie's daughter died when she was 21 years old, and Professor White died shortly afterward.

This double tragedy must have been hard on Mintie, but she decided to devote the rest of her life to children. Between 1895 and 1900 she obtained her teaching certificate. At the age of 45 she became a first grade teacher at Watsonville Primary School.

Her abilities were so outstanding that she was offered the position of school principal. Mintie declined the honor, explaining that she felt the first grade was the most important year in a child's school life, and she was needed more in the classroom. She devoted all her teaching years to first graders.

Mintie is remembered by a fellow teacher who still lives in Watsonville, Marie Rau. They also attended the Presbyterian Church together.

"You always felt so good after you talked to her," Marie says. "She was that kind of person--a good person."

In her later years, Mintie's slender figure thickened, but she still wore her hair up in a bun in the old fashioned way she had always worn it.

She died in 1937 at the age of 87, and the following year a new elementary school on Palm Avenue in Watsonville was named for her.

Old friends still remember that phrase of Mintie's which spelled out her very successful philosophy of teaching: "I never met a child I couldn't love."

In her years of teaching, Mintie met and loved and inspired hundreds of small children. In his autobiography, John Linscott describes her as "one of the best teachers I have ever known."

THOMAS GATCH

Santa Cruz County also had its outstanding men in the field of public education. One of the most notable of early educators was Thomas Gatch, who spent a year and a half in Santa Cruz in the late 1850s and then went on to greater honors.

He became a professor of mathematics at University of the Pacific in Santa Clara County before the college moved to Stockton. Then he went on to Wesleyan Institute at Puget Sound in Washington in 1859, where he gained such notice that, a year later, he was installed as president of Willamette University. In 1886 Gatch was seated as the first president of the University of Washington, and in 1898 he was named president of Oregon Agricultural College.

Gatch was not in Santa Cruz for any length of time, but he is proudly claimed by local historians. He taught for less than eight months in the fledgling Mission Hill School of 1857, the county's first public school.

GEORGE BOND

"Of the many men who have guided the fortunes of Santa Cruz High School and its students, none stands out in clearer relief than George A. Bond," an alumnus has written.

George Bond died in 1944, but he lives on in his accomplishments at Santa Cruz High and in the still-bright memories of his former students. In looking back through the years, they seem to realize that Principal Bond was an unusual person--a born leader and administrator.

He came to Santa Cruz as an English teacher in 1903. Very shortly his abilities were recognized and he was made principal in

1906. He continued in that position until 1924 when he resigned to take a similar position in Santa Paula.

During his years at Santa Cruz High School, Bond was responsible for many educational improvements and innovations. He organized a boys' honor society, the Hi 'Tow Tong. Memorial Field was purchased, the boys' gymnasium was built, and sports were encouraged. Regular gym classes for girls were organized in 1917, and the Girls' Athletic Association and Honor Society were started with the help of Mrs. Bond, who also was a teacher.

The school paper, The Trident, was started in the year Mr. Bond took over as principal and the Associated Students were organized in 1907.

When the big, fairly new (18 years old) Santa Cruz High School building, of which the town was so proud, burned to the ground in 1913, a successful bond issue of 1914 built the present high school plant at the same location, Walnut Avenue at California Street.

During the months when the new high school was under construction, Principal Bond prevailed upon local businessmen and citizens to donate space for students temporarily without a school. Classes were conducted downtown in stores, churches, and the Opera House.

A Domestic Science department was started in 1914, and a school cafeteria a year after that. Manual Training for the boys began in 1916.

Principal Bond also instituted the World War I "Service Book" of war records of Santa Cruz graduates and the planting of memorial trees around the football field in their honor.

"There was always something new and useful going on when he was there," commented Darrell Cardiff, one of Bond's students who remembers.

SOME OTHER SANTA CRUZ HIGH PRINCIPALS

Principals tended to have long careers in the high schools of yesteryear; Walter Elmer, who took up where George Bond had left off at Santa Cruz High School, was there for 19 years. During his tenure adjoining property was purchased to enlarge the school plant. The girls' gymnasium and club rooms were added and five tennis courts were put in.

Shops, a youth center, a power house, new science building, and improved music building were accomplished during the term of Lee T. Sims who took over in 1943.

However, Sims' greatest challenge came in 1953 when the main high school building was tested and declared unsafe for earthquake standards as set by the Field Act.

The Field Act, which specifies certain standards of construction for public school buildings, was passed in 1933 by the California state legislature. The Act came into existence because of a sharp earthquake which jolted the city of Long Beach in general and its older school buildings in particular.

The Field Act also required that all school buildings constructed before 1933 be examined for structural soundness. Trustees were allowed to repair or replace sub-standard buildings, and the law also authorized trustees to call bond elections for either purpose. The Act specifies that if a school fails to meet the standards of safety and a natural disaster causes injury to students, then school trustees, as individuals, are liable and can be sued.

Santa Cruz County's proximity to the San Andreas earthquake fault helped spur county-wide concern regarding its school buildings.

Along with earthquake safety standards there are standards for fire and panic safety, all of which had to be investigated and considered by structural engineers.

Santa Cruz High School's main building, designed by the noted architect W. H. Weeks and built in 1915, was completely renovated

and brought up to meet Field Act standards by 1957 under Sims' supervision. While the work was under way, high school classes were conducted in temporary bungalows placed around the campus. The present cafeteria also was built during that period.

From 1958 to 1964 Jack Snyder served as principal. No building projects were deemed necessary.

Aaron Nelson was next and held the position for ten years during which time new showers and locker rooms were constructed, the Language Building and Music Hall were built, and a swimming pool came into existence.

In 1972 when the old gymnasium was demolished, funds were secured to build the new Fehlman Gymnasium which honors C. E. "Doc" Fehlman, a retired teacher of Santa Cruz High School.

James Coulter took over as principal in 1974, and under his current leadership a new library has been built. It opened in September of 1977.

"DOC"--A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME

There are always a few teachers who manage to catch the imagination of students, parents, and citizens in general and become legends in their own time. Such a teacher is Clinton Earl Fehlman, although few would recognize him by his formal name. He's been "Doc" for all of his 90 years as far as the city of Santa Cruz is concerned.

Doc planned to visit his physician brother in Santa Cruz, then continue on to the Philippine Islands, back in the year 1923. He arrived in Santa Cruz, had his visit, and missed the train that was to take him away. He's been in Santa Cruz ever since. He taught history and civics until 1952 brought retirement--although, to be accurate, has never really retired.

When he put down the history and civics books, Doc began picking up the loose ends of Santa Cruz High's history and that of its

students. He began to save all sorts of bits of information, squirreling them away in boxes in his basement office. Old Trident newspapers, old photos, newspaper articles--Doc saved them all and kept current records on graduates. The number of boxes and file cabinets grew until the little basement room was so crowded that Doc--who is a small, slender person--could hardly get into it himself.

"I have all this valuable information," he would say in his squeaky voice, which rises with excitement. "But I can't keep it properly in this very limited space."

Alumni heard his space laments and finally, slowly, wheels began to turn. The fact that early-year high school classes began to hold reunions also helped. Doc was in evidence at each reunion, and it was his records that made many of them possible.

In October of 1973 Doc's long wished for dream of an Alumni Building came true. The building was put out to bid, and in March Doc broke ground for it with a special shovel. Construction was completed in May, 1974, and Doc immediately moved all his precious boxes, files, and cabinets into his Alumni Building. He's been located there, happily, ever since. He has a card file of more than 14,000 Santa Cruz High School graduates, one of the most complete alumni records in California.

During World War II Doc, with the help of Vice Principal Paul Levy, put out the "Service Cardinal," which endeared him to every graduate who was in the Armed Forces, their families and friends.

Now he is in his building--it is "his" in the truest sense of that word--every weekday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. He is hard at work gathering materials for a Centennial Yearbook which will cover 100 years of graduates and history of Santa Cruz High School.

In the past few years Doc has had many honors come his way. The new high school gym was dedicated to him on February 4, 1977, and most of the town turned out to show him how they feel about him. For his continuing interest in the high school's sports programs, he was presented with an honorary letterman's jacket and serenaded by Santa Cruz High School's "Big Red" Band.

THOMAS MAC QUIDDY

The Watsonville area had its leading men educators also, and Thomas MacQuiddy was one of the outstanding ones. He served as teacher, principal, and superintendent of Watsonville High School for 43 years, something of a record in itself. A graduate of the University of California, he began teaching at the high school in 1905 as a science and mathematics teacher, but two years later was appointed to the post of principal and superintendent.

For several years he continued to teach in addition to his administrative duties, and when he finally quit teaching he held three titles: Watsonville High School Principal, City Superintendent of Schools for Watsonville, and District Superintendent of Schools.

Thomas MacQuiddy is said to have been a very quiet, modest man, calm and capable, his main interest in life the education of the young people of Watsonville.

He headed Watsonville schools in a day and age when parents and teachers were not very active in school affairs or administration. MacQuiddy was in complete control and made all decisions that did not require action by the school board. He had no business manager and, for many years, no assistant superintendent. But in addition to his school duties he found time to serve as secretary of the Central Coast Section of the California Teachers' Association for 25 years.

For 20 years he took no vacation; his only hobby was writing poetry. One time in 1910 he dismissed the high school promptly at 1:45 in the afternoon so the students could hear the world-famous Souza Band at the Opera House.

When he retired in 1948, an editorial in the Watsonville Register-Pajaronian noted that people were "saying that this Community's appreciation for Tom MacQuiddy's work should be evidenced in some definite manner..."

The appreciation came in September, 1950, when the T. S. MacQuiddy Elementary School on Martinelli Street was dedicated.

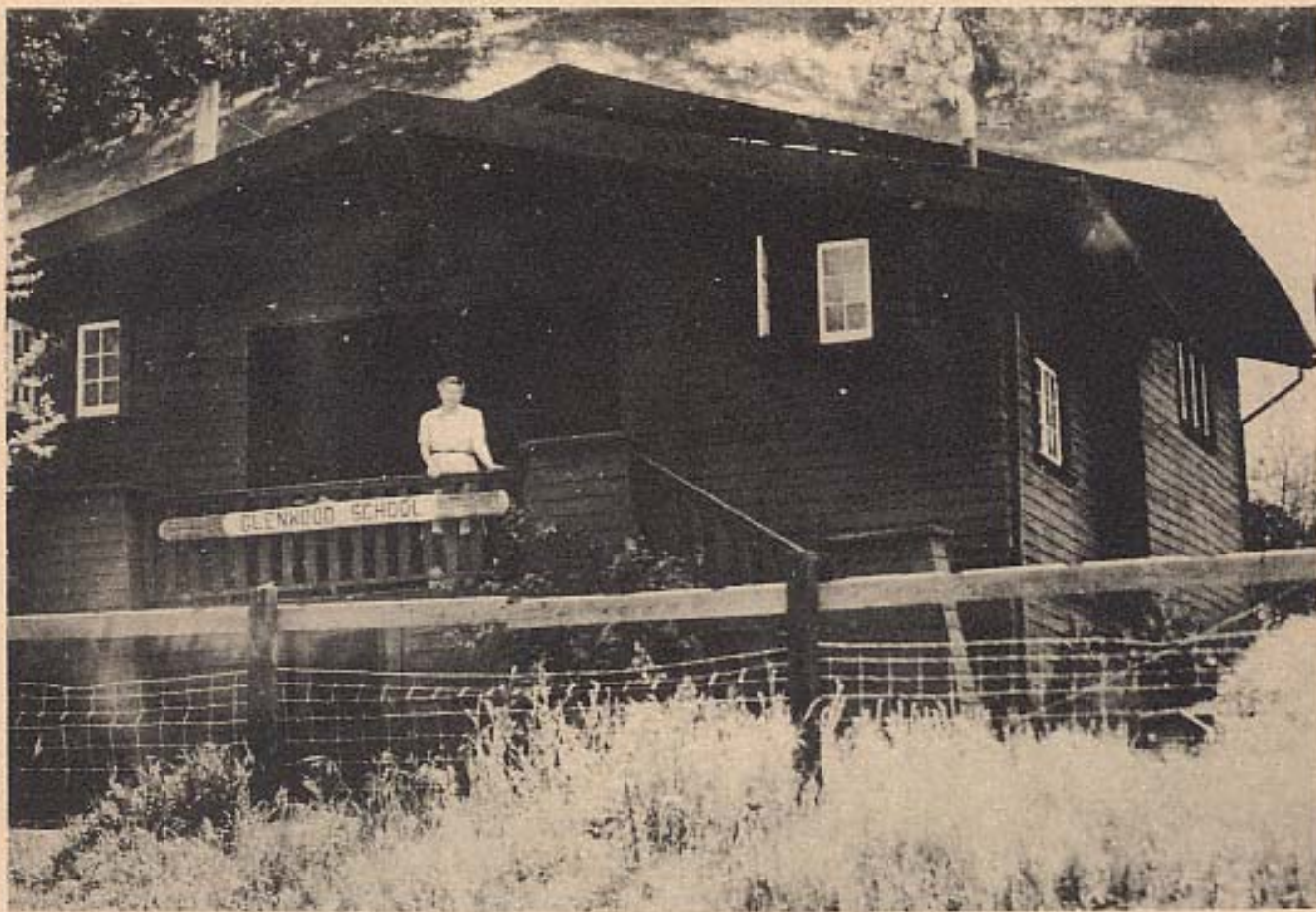
Thomas MacQuiddy had died a year before, in September of 1949, but he knew that the school was to be named for him and was very pleased, according to a later report.

This report (Principal's Newsletter, May 3, 1971) goes on to state: "It is most unlikely that our school system will ever again see the likes of this man whose influence and service spanned nearly half a century..."

The newsletter quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson: "An institution is but the lengthened shadow of a single man," and then said, "If Emerson's statement is correct, then Watsonville High School must be the lengthened shadow of Thomas MacQuiddy."



A proud day for Glenwood School in 1902 when returned veterans of the Spanish-American War visited and presented the school with an American flag. This schoolhouse, located near the foot of the Mountain Charley Road, burned to the ground a few years later, and the school moved to the settlement of Glenwood, further north.



Glenwood School, built in 1920. Located on Glenwood Drive north of Scotts Valley. This photo taken in the early 1940s.