

Callahan School District

There seems to have been at least three school buildings over the years, built on the site of the present school, which dates from 1911 at which time the preceding (wooden) building was torn down. The district was established in June, 1874 when Callahan was a booming gold mining town with over 1,000 miners in the nearby gulches and hills. It had a telegraph office and some of the first electric lights in Northern California.

The town was named after M.B. Callahan who had a ranch nearby. It was the principal freight depot in 1850 when the road across Scott Mountain to Trinity County was completed. Passengers were brought by stage from Yreka to Callahan. The stage coach line boasted two Concord stages.

In 1974 the residents of Callahan celebrated the 100th anniversary of the school. In that same year, the school was closed and the district was annexed to the Etna district. The following newspaper article was written about the 100th anniversary of the Callahan School:

The little Callahan Elementary School will celebrate its 100th – and possibly its last – anniversary June 1, 1974.

Attendance has dropped to the point where it probably will be best for the school's two remaining pupils to attend classes in nearby Etna.

When Callahan School opened in 1874, there were 36 pupils on hand. The school was established after the Gold Rush had brought an army of bearded, dirty miners into the rich diggings of Sugar Creek and along the Scott River that flows past the town.

The Callahan School District was formed by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors after A. H. Denny, a prominent Callahan merchant, had petitioned the board several times.

The supervisors' approval came on June 1, 1874.

A one-room wood schoolhouse was built and classes started in the fall of 1874.

The first teacher was a Miss Rose Barnum, who retired in 1876 to marry Richard M. Hayden.

Miss Nellie Heard, 18, replaced her. The school had 30 "scholars" as they were called in those days.

The following term, in 1877, enrollment jumped to 56.

The pupils weren't all children – people in their 40's sat and studied with the youngsters.

Sabbath school also was held in the schoolhouse and it was the meeting place for the "knights of Good Templar", an early-day organization devoted to denouncing the Demon Run.

By 1880 the school had 85 scholars and a teacher called Mr. Dinkle collected a \$75.00 monthly salary and \$20.00 allowance for board and room.

The pupils and teachers used outdoor privies until indoor plumbing was installed in the late 1940's.

Reference in Board of Supervisors minutes:

August 4, 1872 – Petition for establishing Callahan School District was denied (3-172)

Established: June 1, 1874 – Boundary description may be found in records in County of Superintendent of Schools office.

June 1, 1874 – No description give, “set off from South Fork District” (3-172)

January 4, 1889 – Callahan and East fork were consolidated (4-394)

April 2, 1889 – Callahan's name changed to McConaughy (4-419)

July 9, 1908 – South Fork School District annexed to Callahan (7-522)

September 21, 1908 – Bond election failed (7-540 & 7-554)

February 14, 1961 – Election to form union district (27-10)



Callahan students, ca. 1929. Photo loaned by the Siskiyou County Public Library.



ca. 1935. Photo by Mildred Grant, donated by Roderick and Larry Grant. Siskiyou County Office of Education School History Collection.



Callahan students, date unknown. Siskiyou County Office of Education School History Collection.



ca. 1935. Photo by Bob Dennis, from the collection of Bob Dais.



ca. 1945. Siskiyou County Office of Education School History Collection.