

A SHORT HISTORY OF GRANT HIGH SCHOOL

No more striking example of the determination of the American people to secure free public education for their children can be offered than that of the Grant Union High School District. The first step toward the formation of a high school district in the territory north of the American River came on Monday evening, May 11, 1931, when a mass meeting was held at the Robla School with George Wilson of Rio Linda as chairman. After open discussion a motion was carried to organize a permanent committee to direct the movement. Mr. Wilson was elected chairman and A. C. Feige secretary.

Delegates were chosen from the various grammar school districts, as follows; King Lee and M. C. Bailey, Robla; Charles A. Anderson and Charles C. Strauch Elverta; W. M. Robinson and James Purcell, Del Paso Heights; George Wilson, John Grundhoefer, Harry A. Peterson and P. M. Norbryhn, Rio Linda; S. A. Wroolie and R. L. McKern, North Sacramento and Hagginwood.

At the very first meeting the name of the school was determined. American, Del Paso and Grant Union High School were the three names suggested, Grant getting more than the necessary majority.

Mr. Feige's well kept minutes tell the story of the persistent drive toward achieving the committee's goal. On May 18 the second meeting was held and a report given on petitions for an election to form the high school district. All but four voters in the entire Robla area had already signed. Elverta and Del Paso Heights also turned in their petitions, while Rio Linda, Hagginwood and North Sacramento asked for more time to complete the canvass.

The third meeting was held at the Hagginwood School on May 25. Mr. Purcell reported on the number of signatures needed in the different grammar school districts. It was decided to find out the exact boundaries of the grammar districts from R. E. Golway, county superintendent of schools. On June 3, B. I. Cropsy gave a report on this subject and also spoke on the time needed for procedure and for construction of the high school buildings.

At the fifth meeting, June 10, reports were given concerning additional signatures on the petitions. The number was found to be sufficient and Mr. Wroolie's motion to turn in the petitions to the county superintendent was carried. Mr. Wilson reported on the committee's visit to Mr. Golway's office and the fine co-operation he volunteered. The sixth meeting was held July 22, at which plans were made to get out the vote on election day, only a week distant.

The first big hurdle was cleared on July 28, 1931, when the people voted by the overwhelming totals of 750 to 25 to uphold the hard work of their committee and form a union high school district. Subsequently the committee endorsed S. A. Wroolie, H. A. Peterson, Charles A. Anderson, Marvin C. Bailey and James Purcell as candidates for the high school's first board of trustees. On September 14 the entire group was elected, after which the first board meeting was held September 30, 1931.

First setback to the high school plan--fortunately only temporary-- came on January 4, 1932, when the \$250,000 bond issue to buy land and construct the building was defeated, largely owing to the fact that no definite site had been selected and that no set of figures had been issued as to how the money would be spent.

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At this point the board decided that the services of a professional schoolman were necessary and asked William Rutherford, present principal of the high school, to consult with them and aid in the project. Mr. Rutherford did this, found that a bond issue of \$150,000 instead of the larger amount would suffice, and after an educational campaign the second bond issue was enthusiastically passed by a four-to-one vote on June 21, 1932. The following day the board appointed Mr. Rutherford principal.

Bustling activity followed. Starting without a penny, the school was aided by the courtesies of its many friends and the office of the county superintendent of schools. Despite adverse financial conditions the board disposed of \$30,000 of its bonds and construction was begun on the temporary buildings.

Hearty student support was shown on the very first day, September 12, 1932, when 580 students enrolled after only 400 had been anticipated. The board immediately had to increase its teaching force of sixteen by hiring four more teachers. Four full years of high school work were offered, including academic, commercial, agriculture, homemaking and shop courses and physical education. The high quality of this work was attested to by the University of California, which promptly put Grant on its list of accredited high schools.

The industry of the board of trustees in the hectic days of founding the school is shown by the fact that 140 meetings were held in the first three years, whereas the average school board meets but once a month. The board members unselfishly sacrificed their time and paid their own transportation expenses to attend. During this initial period of the school's history the only change in the original board came in the resignation of James Purcell, who moved away from the district. James H. Hodge was appointed to serve out his unexpired term, after which Ernest L. McKinnon was elected for the full term. With Mr. Peterson and Mr. Anderson, Mr. McKinnon is still on the board, serving with two newcomers, Charles J. Lipold and D. K. Colclough.

On Sunday, May 20, 1935, a momentous event was held at Grant Union High School, dedication ceremonies for the splendid new building program, attended by a crowd of two thousand, the dedication address was delivered by the Honorable Martin I. Welsh, superior judge of Sacramento county and long a friend of the school.

Today's program is, in a way, a necessary supplement to that of 1935, the present \$74,000 new wing being built to meet the constant growth of the school. Enrollment today--and still on the upgrade--is 1028, almost twice that of five years ago. During the past year the district has also been enlarged by annexation of Arden, Junior Pacific and American Basin areas, which are now welcomed as an integral part of the school bringing the valuation of the district to over \$11,000,000.

The completed new building, with outdoor swimming pool adjoining, and its recreational grounds gives Grant one of the finest plants, from every standpoint in the entire state.

The Federal and state governments and private friends have been more than liberal in their gifts to the school, this sum amounting to \$160,800.00