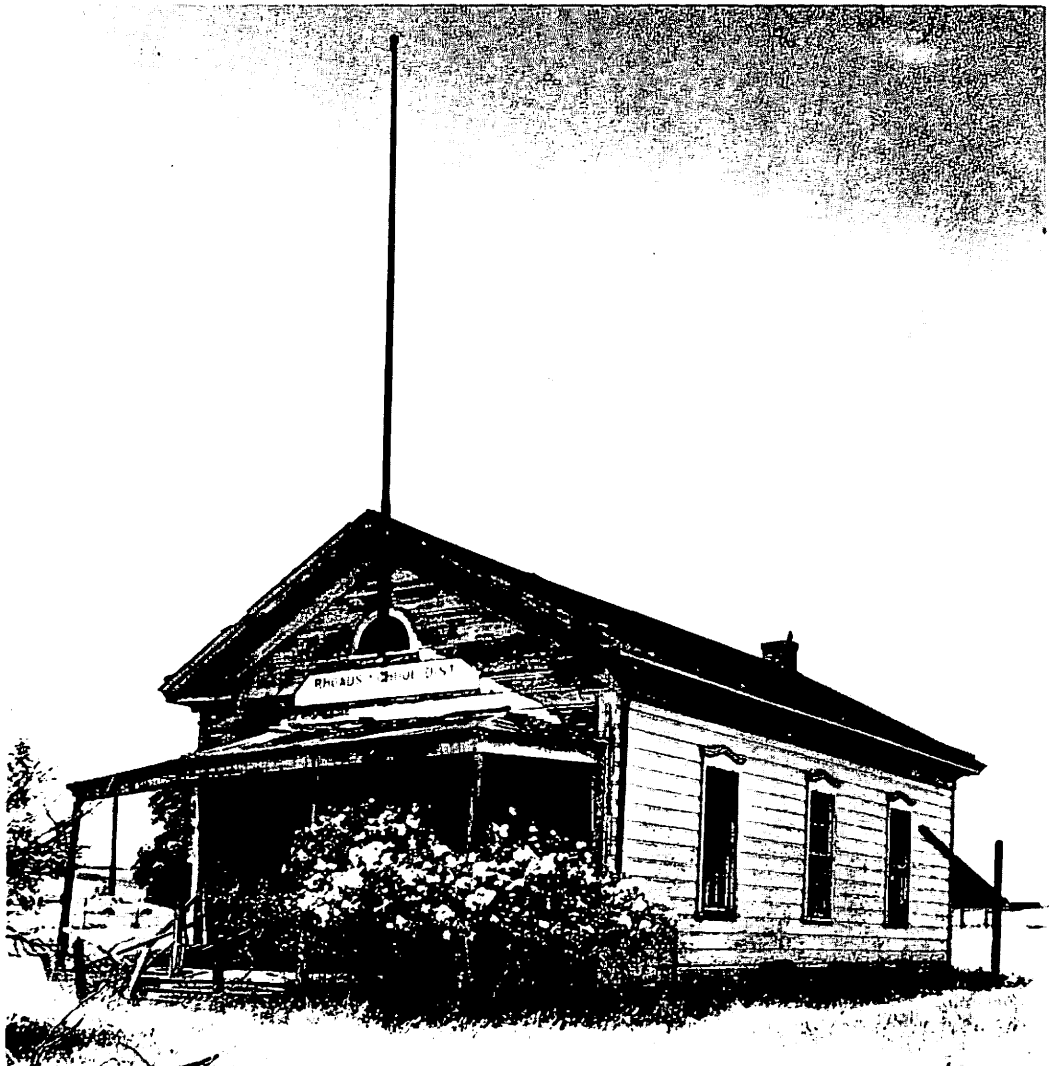


GOLDEN ☆ NOTES

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Memories of the Rhoads School



SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Plaque on the restored Rhoads School

*Dedicated
to
Pioneer Educators
be they then or now
in loving memory
of
Myrtle F. and Ralph I. Murphy
given by their children
1976*

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PREFACE



The author, Beth Murphy Engs, is especially well qualified to pen these memories of Rhoads School. In 1886 her family acquired the property of William Humphrey Taylor who had helped organize the school and on whose property it was built. His home was located directly across Slough House Road from the school.

The Taylor-Murphy home was important to the school. Children daily carried drinking water from the Murphy well to the school while those who rode horseback or drove wagons to the school could water their horses at the watering trough.

The Murphy family was closely associated with Rhoads School from the beginning. Grandmother Murphy's uncle, Samuel Hason Jackman, was Sacramento County Superintendent of Common Schools when the school was established in 1872. The author's aunt taught at the school in 1889 and again in 1897. Her uncle served as a trustee for seven years prior to the many years her father served in that capacity. Her father had also attended Rhoads School when it had ten grades. She, her brothers, sisters and cousins all attended Rhoads School.

Consequently the author not only experiences much of what she writes about but knew persons who had been associated with the school from its very early days, not only relatives but also former teachers and long time neighbors. Interviews with them were an important source for this story. After the building was abandoned as a school house, ownership reverted to the Murphy family. This fact together with the Murphy family's long formal and informal association with the Rhoads School has enabled the author to collect, over a long period of time, important documents and memorabilia which together with taped interviews and personal experience, were the sources for much of this story. The original documents are now in the possession of the Sacramento City and County Museums.

Details of the early days of the first Rhoads School are uncertain, as are the causes of its abrupt end in 1867. Descendants of Jared Dixon Sheldon claim that he authorized and perhaps built the school prior to his death in 1851 and that, because of his interest in education, he may even have taught there.

The exact location of the original Rhoads School is also uncertain. It stood somewhere near the southerly line of the Rhoads property, on the north side of the Cosumnes River, a short distance west of the levee. Jared Sheldon had given the property to his father-in-law, Thomas Rhoades, shortly after his marriage to Catherine Rhoades. Records show that Thomas Rhoades and his family never actually lived on the property. However, a letter, now in the possession of Sheldon descendants, tells of Thomas helping his son John plant wheat on the Cosumnes River property in 1847. It wasn't until 1852 that John owned the property in his own right, purchasing the land at a sheriff's sale, when its owners proved unable to meet their commitment to the first administrators of the Jared Sheldon Estate, Mrs. Sheldon and Gabriel Gunn. John Rhoads and his second wife, Mary Murray, settled there and remained until his death on December 20, 1866, less than a year before the school on the river ceased operation.

One can easily see how the school came to be named for John Pierce Rhoads. The Donner Party rescues were still vivid in people's minds and Rhoads played a part in three of the four rescue parties. He lived on the river and his neighbors must have had personal knowledge of the price he paid for his efforts in the rescues.¹ Referring to John's health and the Donner rescues, Mrs. Kitty Sheldon Cothrin wrote, ".....John caught pneumonia before he was through with the last party. He was described as a 'Mountain of a Man' and the hardship and severity of the ordeal weakened him so he caught cold easily the rest of his life and died young of pneumonia..."² John P. Rhoads died at the age of 48.

The first mention of Rhoads School in the county records was in The Sacramento County Schools Ledger for the school year 1857-58. The school budget for that year was \$108.79. Expenditures listed two county warrants drawn; one dated May in the amount of \$57.79, and the second dated June in the amount of \$51.00. One assumes that the two warrants were for the teacher's salary. Rhoads School continues to appear in the Sacramento County school ledgers through the school year 1866-67. The largest budget was for the school year 1859-60 in the amount of \$659.58. The average yearly budget, over the ten year

period, amounted to slightly over \$300.00. Virtually all warrants issued were for teachers' salaries. It is apparent that no public money, or very little, was spent for school supplies in the Rhoads School District at that time.

In 1863 County School superintendents were required to send reports on the county's schools to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. These reports, bound together, were known as the Common School Reports. The Rhoads School was reported only once, for the school year 1866-67, although it appears in the County Schools ledger for the school years 1857-58 through 1866-67. In the Common School Report for 1866-67, Rhoads School district reported an enrollment of 30 students with an average attendance of 18.9. The school term lasted for six months, from December through May. The value of the schoolhouse, furnishings and lot, was stated to be \$200.00. The school district also reported using the entire state series of textbooks.

The Common Schools Act of 1866 authorized the State Board of Education to adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of schools, to establish a course of study, and to adopt a series of textbooks. Local districts were required, at district expense, to furnish pupils with school supplies, such as paper, pen, ink and chalk, and to provide school libraries. In the same year public schools were made free for every student for the first time.

A state law was passed funding public schools with revenue raised from property taxes at the rate of five cents per \$100.00 evaluation. Each county was required to levy a county school tax sufficient to raise a minimum of \$2.00 per capita per year for each school census child between the ages of four and eighteen. In addition to county revenue, school districts received money from the state. Rhoads School District, with fewer than 100 children and less than \$200,000.00 taxable property, was permitted to maintain the school for as short a time as three months per year.

The cause or causes of the closing of the original Rhoads School, located on the Cosumnes River, were never recorded. The property could hardly have been sold, since the lot was listed as part of the district property evaluation of 1866-67. Nor would flood be a likely explanation since school was kept in session through May of that year. Could fire have been the culprit? Could the meager facilities, valued at \$200.00, have been declared unfit for school use? Could it have been

that the district was unable to meet the new requirements for education as established by the legislature?

The Sacramento County Schools Cash Book 1867-70 records the closing out of the accounts for Rhoads School in October, 1867. The money was transferred to the Union School, the next district south. For the next five years, the children from Rhoads School District had to travel to Union School to receive schooling, a distance of up to five or six miles.



*Rhoads School and its Student Body 1915-1916
Author is directly under teacher's right elbow.*

Five years to the month after the closing of the Rhoads School on the Cosumnes River, the second Rhoads School opened for its first term.

Plans for the new school were developed under the direction of Humphrey Taylor and others. At a public meeting, plans for the school and its location were outlined and subscribers of funds enrolled. The planning state is recorded in two undated documents. The preliminary document included a rough sketch of the school, gave its proposed dimensions, identified the area within which the school was to be located, and named the collector of funds so that the subscribers, who signed in the space provided, would know who was responsible for receiving their contributions. The second document appears to be a refinement of the first, adding one item on the use of the building for non-school functions. The following is an exact copy of the second document:

We the undersigned agree to pay the following amounts of money set opposite our names to build a School House on or near the Road on the westerly line of Improvements of Chs Ridder M & B Murrays J C Belcher H Taylors Mrs. Otis Mr. Mulls & thence to Slough House Hill intersecting with Jackson Road The location of House not to be farther East or up the River than the Rhoads Estate nor farther west or down the river than H Taylor's on the above named Road which is now petitioned to be Established as a county Road The House to be of the following dimensions twenty four feet wide thirty Six feet long & fourteen twelve feet posts with (3) windows on Each Side and door & Sidelights in front & two windows in back End with Siding on outside inside floors Sides & ceiling to be of tounge & Grooved lumber the Amounts Subscribed to be paid to parties authorized to collect the Same on demand & the house allways to (be) free for all religious denominations when not occupied for school purposes....³

The site chosen by the first board of trustees was two acres on the west side of the new road, now Slough House Road, just inside the northeast property line of the H. Taylor Ranch. After the site was chosen,

Mr. Taylor, who was dedicated to education, may well have donated these two acres.

At the end of the preliminary document there was also a list of persons willing to haul loads of lumber and other materials from Sacramento. It read; "Chas. M. Taylor, two loads; J.C. Belcher two loads and W.C. Sheldon one load."³ In 1871, lumber was costly and hard to get. Most of the homes that the new school would serve had been built with reused lumber, some of which had been brought around the Horn. New lumber would be used in the school. A load could be hauled from Sacramento in a day by starting before dawn and arriving home after dark. With a good team the trip one way took a minimum of five hours. Consequently the loads hauled by the three men represented a significant outlay of time and labor.

In addition to the money raised by subscription, Mrs. Belcher, wife of newly-elected trustee J.C. Belcher, gave a ball to assist with the fund-raising. The Belcher home was originally a hotel at Whitehall, complete with a small ballroom on the second floor. It was purchased by Mr. Belcher, dismantled and rebuilt in 1868 at its present location on the river. Fifty-four tickets for the fund-raising ball sold for \$3.50 each, eight tickets for \$1.00 each and seven tickets for fifty cents each. Four cakes sold at the ball brought in another \$6.25. Receipts from items sold, and donations to pay for pickles, crackers, etc., amounted to \$18.67. Expenses for the event included payments for 150 pounds of barley, 215 pounds of hay, music(k), (\$50.00) and tickets, (\$3.50), which, when combined with other costs, came to \$94.49. After the ball, \$135.00 was given to the trustees for the school fund. An additional donation of \$3.47 must have been made, although it is not shown.

The school was constructed by Mr. H. O'Hale, a carpenter from Sacramento. It was a handsome school building, in the Greek Revival style brought to California during the Gold Rush period. It is not known if Mr. O'Hale constructed the building by himself or with paid help. He may have been assisted by volunteers, as was the custom in early days. The finished building was four feet longer than planned, with the back windows omitted to avoid glare. In a receipt headed "Sacramento May 6th 1872" Mr. O'Hale stated that he:

.....received of the Trustees of Rhoads School
house Chs Taylor, B Murray and J.C. Belcher by

the hand of J C Belcher the sum of one thousand seventy five dollars this being in full for all material & labor of every description & I deliver to J.C. Belcher the key of said school house it being paid for in full

H. O'Hale...³

The fact that the receipt was made out in Sacramento and that the money was received by Mr. O'Hale from J.C. Belcher representing the trustees indicate that the school may have been finished earlier and Mr. Belcher instructed to make payment in response to a bill presented to the school district by Mr. O'Hale.

Final accounting for funds raised and monies spent was made on May 24, 1872. The final list of subscribers omits some of the names on the original list. Possibly these families were not in the district, had moved out of the district or were unable to meet this commitment.



Taken 1896 – Lafayette Miller, teacher

List of Subscribers to the Rhoads School*

May 24th 72

Amounts pd for School House to date

H. Taylor	318.30
A Mull	318.00
J C Belcher	318.30
Chs Taylor	25.00
W Sheldon	30.00
S B Moore	20.00
Mr Jefferson	10.00
W Wade	10.00
S Howell	10.00
Mr Pickett	10.00
H White	10.00
A Hall	5.00
W Murray	5.00
M Murray	<u>50.00</u>
	1139.60
Rec'd from Party	<u>135.00</u>
	1274.60
Rec'd from B Murray	<u>10.00</u>
	1284.60

A separate sheet lists funds spent:

May 24th 1872

Amt pd for School House by J C Belcher to date

Receipt from H O'Hale	1075.00
Bill of doors & lumber for out house	7.40
" " nails for same	2.00
Pd Rikerland for building outhouse	20.00
Insurance	14.00
Lumber for finishing outhouse	10.50
Clock bucket, Broom & dipper	5.50
Pd for 14 seats	118.50
" " seats	28.50
" " desk	8.00
" " chair	2.75
" " stove & fixtures	<u>20.45</u>
	1312.60
Rec'd	<u>1284.60</u>
	28.00
Received from C Taylor	<u>28.00</u>

*Document in Beth Eng's collection.

The new school was now clear of debt and operating.

A student who lived near one corner of the district had good reason for her vivid memory of the school's earliest days. In later years of her life, Aunt Emma, as she was called by almost everyone, told the story of the lost baby. Shortly after the school was constructed, a "house warming" was held. Since the road was not yet worn smooth and there were no fences, people were able to cut across the fields in almost a direct line to the school. That evening she and her family, including their small baby, drove by team and spring wagon to the festivities. When the evening ended they started home in the dark, with only the light of a lantern to guide them. In the dark their wagon hit a very bad chuck hole. Immediately, count was taken to see that everyone was all right. They were fine, but the baby was missing! Aunt Emma told of the panic that gripped the children as Mama and Papa searched for the baby by lantern light, on the ground in back of the wagon. Finally, Baby was found unharmed, saved by the extra blankets she had been wrapped in for the night trip home.

The school first opened in May of 1872 for a term of one and a half months and certificates were awarded on June 18th. During the first term, 21 students were enrolled, with an average daily attendance of 15. The new school was visited by the Sacramento County Superintendent of Common Schools twice during its short first term, no doubt to assist in getting it off to a good start. Mr. Samuel Hason Jackman, the Superintendent, reported that the school was well supplied with furniture, but lacking in classroom apparatus.

It is not known if the schoolhouse was painted when first built. However, in April 1880, after eight years of operation, a benefit performance was held to raise money to paint the schoolhouse. An analysis of paint samples taken from the building shows that the outside was originally painted yellow. This will probably startle those who were accustomed to the building during the years it was painted white.

The school yard was large but unimproved and included only a single outhouse. After a year of operation an additional outhouse proved necessary and the Common Schools Report for 1872-73 shows that the new outhouse was built at that time. The boys' facility was northwest of the school, the girls', southwest. As was the practice, the outhouses were moved to new locations as required, but always with the girls' southwest and the boys' northwest. After the cross-country

fire of 1947, in which these outbuildings were burned, a single facility was again erected.

Until the late twenties or early thirties, drinking water had to be carried by bucket from the well across the road at the Taylor home (which became the Murphy home in 1886). The bucket, with a dipper in it, sat on a wooden bench at the north side of the cloakroom, which took the full right side of the anteroom. Those wishing water drank from the dipper then returned it to the bucket. The bench also served as a storage area for the students' lunches. Children brought their lunches in newspapers, used paper bags, lard pails, tobacco cans and, in a few cases, "boughten" lunch boxes. In the early days, milk, buttermilk or cocoa were carried in small mason jars with screw top zinc lids. In later years, tin buckets outnumbered the paper wrapped lunches since they were easy to keep clean and the contents less likely to be squashed. (Children carrying their lunches often sampled them on their walk to school in the morning, and finished any leftovers from lunch on the way home.) Students living near school used the 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. lunch hour to go home for lunch.

The bucket for drinking water was replaced by a water cooler in 1915 and individual drinking cups provided by the students took the place of the dipper. The drinking cups were hung on the bottom part of the coat hooks provided in the cloakroom. The upper part of the hook was used for hats, often sweaty, during the warm weather, and for cold, wet outer garments in winter. Hooks were assigned to students by height.

Besides carrying the water, student chores included hauling wood from the combination woodshed-horsebarn in the northwest corner of the schoolyard. The wood was used to feed the fire in the rectangular cast iron stove in the middle of the classroom, the school's only means of heat. The stovepipe rose from the back of the stove to about 1½ feet from the ceiling then ran parallel to the ceiling until it reached the chimney flue at the back of the classroom. This arrangement kept the heat from the stovepipe in the classroom for as long as possible. The wood-burning stove continued to be used until an oil burning unit was installed in the late thirties.

In August, 1891, the Rhoads School District spent \$27.00 to have a well bored. It did not prove satisfactory and water was again carried from Murphy's well. The Taylors and then the Murphys also allowed watering trough privileges for the horses of those who rode horseback

or drove carts or buggies to school. The water was pumped first by windmill, then gas engine, and in the twenties after power became available, by an electric pump. Shortly thereafter water was piped to the school from the Murphy well, making possible a drinking fountain in the cloakroom and running water outside. About the same time electricity was provided for the school by hooking into the Murphy power line.

School district affairs were administered by a three man board of trustees. On the first board were Charles M. Taylor, Clerk; John C. Belcher and B.B. Murray. Their first duties had been locating the new school within the limitations specified by the people in the district and taking charge of affairs during the construction of the building. In the Common School Report of 1871-72 expenditures for building, furniture and site amounted to \$2,000. Continuing duties of the trustees included employing the teacher, managing the budget, purchasing and managing school properties, and supplying the school with the necessary writing and drawing paper, pens, ink, blackboards, crayons, lead and slate pencils, etc. Although women were eligible from 1874 on, no woman ever served as a trustee during the existence of the Rhoads School District.

A substitute teacher once remarked that she felt that the Rhoads School District had a "commitment to education" that she hadn't felt in other districts where she taught. One example of the district's commitment was its continued compliance with recommendations relating to libraries. The first recorded library expenditure was in the school year 1873-74. Annual expenditures continued to be made until 1938. There were 116 volumes reported in 1880-81. In 1887 there was an increase to 109 volumes, and by 1895 there were 322 volumes, of which 86 had been read by students during the year. The first mechanical pencil sharpener purchased by Rhoads School was mounted in the library. This library was located in the south third of the anteroom and was kept under lock and key, as suggested by the rules for District Libraries. Rhoads School library also served as a community library throughout the years of its operation. Funds were received from the County Library Fund consisting of between five and ten per cent of the County School Fund apportioned to the district annually.

Although the school was built with private funds, it was operated with public monies. For the first term of 1½ months the school district

received \$23.69 from state apportionment and \$67.94 from county taxes, as apportioned by the county supervisors. For this first term a school tax was levied on property owners in conjunction with the Union District. The next year, Rhoads District continued to levy this tax at the 20¢ rate.

Operating funds were received from three sources; state apportionment, county tax monies, apportioned by the county supervisors, and district taxes. By the time Rhoads district was dissolved, because of unionization in 1946, state revenue had increased from \$23.69 in 1871-72 to \$1,666.50 in 1945-46. County revenue had increased from \$67.94 in 1871-72 to \$1,277.10 in 1928-29. The 1935-36 school year was the last time county apportioned revenues were reported going to the Rhoads School District. From 1938 until the district ceased operating in 1946, property owners within the district were taxed to raise the required school monies.

Teachers at the Rhoads School were usually young unmarried women, inexperienced as teachers. Many had just passed the county teachers' examinations, or had recently received their certificates for teacher training. All were endeavoring to get experience in order to get better paying positions with opportunity for advancement. During the 74 years of its existence only seven of the Rhoads School teachers were male.

All teachers were required to be eighteen years of age and to hold a valid teaching certificate. Teaching certificates were granted by the County Board of Examiners upon successful completion of an examination prepared under the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. Teachers receiving a score of 85% were awarded a "first grade" certificate; a score of 80% a "second grade" certificate and 75% a "third grade" certificate. The school at which the teacher taught was rated according to the certificate held by the teacher. Agnes S. Jaycoax, who taught the first term at Rhoads School, received a salary of \$60.00 per month and brought the school a "first grade" rating as compared to the "third grade" rating of the Rhoads School on the river.

Teachers' examinations were detailed and specific and by no means easy. In addition to the ten grades taught at Rhoads School, some former students returned for review and coaching before taking the county examinations for a teaching certificate. The examinations did not require a knowledge of teaching methods. It was assumed that if a

teacher was competent in the prescribed subjects he or she would be a good teacher. For three to five days every year county institutes were held in Sacramento to inform teachers of new methods and materials. Between 1872 and 1908, with the exception of only three years, the Rhoads teachers always attended.

Teachers salaries at Rhoads from 1872 to 1906 ranged from a low of \$55.00 per month to a high of \$84.80, including board. It is of note that in 1874 the legislature provided that, in public schools, female teachers would be paid the same rate for the same services as male teachers with the same certification.

Most teachers taught at Rhoads only one or two years then moved on to greater opportunities, or to schools closer to home. The exceptions were the local girls who taught from two to twelve years. The method of recruiting teachers varied. A written letter of application and a personal interview were required. When applicants were lacking, the County Superintendent made referrals or advertised the vacancy.

One teacher, telling how she got her first school, Rhoads School, said her mother met the clerk of the school district, and old friend, at a funeral and he told her he was endeavoring to find a teacher for the coming school year. Her mother mentioned that her daughter had just taken and passed, with a high score, the county examinations and asked that her daughter be considered for the vacancy. He advised that her daughter make immediate application and arrange for an interview. The daughter was hired and she taught for two years at the school. Sixty years later she still was able to name her former students and recall details about the school. She told of her worry about things possibly "getting out of hand" since she was only two years older than the oldest boys in school. Because of this she maintained strict discipline in the classroom. She spoke of her sadness at leaving her home to board at the home of strangers, who were boarding the new teacher out of a sense of duty, and told of her walk of over a mile to and from school, rain or shine, carrying her lunch, books and school papers. She also told of her uneasiness when the annual visit by Caroline Webb, the Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools, was approaching. After the visit she described Miss Webb as "a dear". Her arrangements with the trustees included transportation to and from Sheldon, approximately 6 miles distant, on the weekends when she wished to go home. At Sheldon she would take the "Traction" cars to Sacramento where she

caught the evening river boat down river to her home.

Another former teacher told of being taken to the Traction by an unmarried trustee, who stopped on the way and proposed marriage. Many teachers did marry local persons and settled permanently in the community. Several teachers told of boarding in homes that did not have space for a boarder, but because "school had to keep" they accepted the obligation of boarding the teacher.

A former student recalled a stormy day when the teacher arrived at school with the bottom flounce of her long three-flounced skirt muddied and wet from fording a small run-off stream swollen with water from the storm. Students with open mouths marvelled as she took a large pair of scissors and cut off the bottom flounce. Common to most early schools during stormy weather, classes were dismissed early so that everyone could reach home before the run-off streams and Deer Creek flooded, which could happen in a matter of hours. Neighbors close to flooded areas often kept as guests those unwilling to chance the high water.

Two former teachers spoke of the testing of new teachers by a father, who had also been a teacher sometime in his past and who felt he should make a judgment on the teacher. One substitute teacher told of a difficult arithmetic problem that was sent to school with one of the children along with a polite note requiring the answer the next day. She related how she and the regular teacher worked half the night figuring the correct answer, which she relayed by note in her best penmanship the next day. Nothing more was heard from the father.

From the beginning, music played an important part in the school program. No one recorded the date that the pump organ was purchased for the school, but it was repaired in 1891 for the sum of \$9.00. Later, a small square grand piano was purchased to replace it and later still, a phonograph and records were purchased for classroom use.

The flag-raising became the opening event of the school day after the beautiful flagpole was installed on the schoolhouse. Children stood at attention while the flag was raised, then marched into the schoolroom to the accompaniment of the pump organ, and later the piano or a tap bell. When the Pledge of Allegiance became a part of the school program, the pledge was recited outside, except on rainy days. For years the flag was flown at half-mast whenever there was a death in the district.

It wasn't until long after the turn of the century that the fairly large but inadequately equipped playground received attention. Until then, students provided their own equipment. Most students owned marbles, jacks, and hopscotch blocks and these were produced when the proper season arrived. Then there were games requiring little or no equipment. "Ante-I-Over" the schoolhouse was popular through the years, the entire school taking part, with the smaller children mostly running and shouting. "Kick-the-Wicket" required only a stick and provided vigorous activity for the cooler days. All participated, as they did in "Dare Base" and "Red Line". The games played varied with the seasons. Most years, in the spring, students constructed a fort near the Old Gum Tree on the north side of the schoolyard, using grass gathered from the schoolyard. In rainy or damp weather, recesses and noon hours were spent indoors playing blackboard and other games. The favorite was "Hang-Man". "Puss-in-the-Corner" was also played. The smallness of the school prohibited most team games, unless mixed teams were allowed, as most years there were not enough boys in the school to make a team. A former student recalled the time the Rhoads School boys' baseball team was eliminated from playday participation because their center fielder was a girl. Another student recalled how one of the older boys hit home runs with a bat made at home from a wagon tongue. Games, other than baseball, allowed all ages to participate without slowing the game too much for the older children. All ages played as soon as skills were developed sufficiently to enter into the activity. A popular singing game among the younger children was "Draw-a-Bucket-of-Water". "Drop-the-Handkerchief" was also a favorite. And there was always the big swing in the "Old Gum Tree".

Excitement always ran high on the last day of school. No classes were held in order that preparations might be made for the traditional school picnic. A community affair, long in the planning, it was usually an all day event held on one of the neighboring ranches among the groves of oak near Deer Creek. Games were followed by picnic food, good beyond description, ending with all the ice cream one could eat. Early on the morning of the picnic, one of the neighbors would make the long trip to Sacramento, returning with huge blocks of ice to the home where other neighbors had gathered with their ice cream freezers to "crank up the cream". When the ice cream was firm the dashers were removed and the ice cream packed in ice to "ripen" until the magic moment when

the "dishing up" took place at the picnic.

During the years Sadie Belcher was the teacher, often the school picnics were held in the Belcher yard, where the children were fascinated with the paths lined with Grandma Belcher's ale bottles. Made of crockery, they formed an impressive edging when turned upside down. Children played games on tables arranged under the trees. One student recalled the many lead soldiers he was allowed to play with from Miss Belcher's game collection. After the games were removed the tables were set with a sumptuous picnic lunch prepared by the ladies of the community.

Graduation exercises were usually school performances or entertainments. There were never more than five or six in the graduating class, sometimes none or only one. Students traveled to Sacramento to take the graduation examination, until the turn of the century when these trips were abandoned in favor of locally administered examinations. However, the examination continued to be prepared by the County Office of Education. If graduates wished to go on to high school it was necessary for most of them to board in Sacramento because of the distance. Although the Elk Grove High School District was formed in 1893, transportation was not generally available until bus service was provided for the Rhoads District in the early twenties.

Following abandonment of the building as a schoolhouse in 1949, the ownership reverted to the Murphy family. Thereafter for eleven years, it was used by the Catholic Sisters for catechism classes for children of the area. Use was also granted to a rural Sunday school group. The facility was also used for parties and family get-togethers and was the center of the Murphy centennial celebration in 1954.

Through the years, the schoolhouse was protected in hopes of finding a permanent home commensurate with its historical background. Many offers to buy were rejected. With its authorization as a Bicentennial Project and the availability of funds for restoration the children of Myrtle F. and Ralph I. Murphy gave the facility to Sacramento County in August, 1975 to be restored and preserved.

On May 19, 1976, the Rhoads School was lifted from its brick pier foundation of one hundred four years. It was transported to Grant Line Road by truck-trailer on the old back field road, the road the Stafford children used to walk or ride horseback to school in days long since gone. The school was moved south on Grant Line to the Frontage Road

north of Highway 99, then north on Elk Grove-Florin Road to reach its new home in Elk Grove Park, a journey of thirteen miles taking approximately two hours. Later it was lowered onto newly-made brick piers prepared under the direction of the Elk Grove Bicentennial Committee.

There it has been restored to its true self of 1890-1910. And there, the children of Sacramento County will have an opportunity to experience life as students in the turn-of-the-century one-room Rhoads School.

We of the older generation who attended one-room schools look back upon the experience with nostalgia. Our nostalgia is not only a longing for the life of the one room school, but also a full realization of the meaning and worth of the experience. These schools developed values of self-worth, mutual respect and self reliance. Here concern for others emerged because special problems were everyone's problems. Some of the newest and most advanced educational theories were practiced of necessity in these "old-fashioned" schools. They included the concept of the ungraded classroom in which each pupil advances at his or her own rate of speed, assigning older students to tutor younger ones, encouraging competition with one's self and cooperation with others in school, on the playground and in the community. The one room school is disappearing but those fortunate enough to have attended one will never forget the experience. The one room school stands as a monument to the intense desire for education felt by our pioneer and rural forebearers.



RHOADS SCHOOL TEACHERS
1865-1920

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>School Year</u>
E. Rousseau	1865-66
Nancy Davenport	1866-67
Agnes S. Jaycoax	1871-72
Annie Maynard Skinner	1872-73
W. H. Housh	1875-76
M. S. Belcher	1876-77
Mary Grant	1880-82
Josephine Jones	1882-83
Josie Jones	1884-85
Tevis Ross	1885-86
Miss K. E. Walsh	1886-87
Carrie Merrill	1887-89
Mrs. Clara McDonald	1889-90
Jennie Graves	1890-91
Katie Miller	1891-92
S. C. Garrison	1894-95
Layfette Miller	1895-97
Mrs. Clara McDonald	1897-98
S. Maret	1898-99
Lillian Macy, Marie Edgington	1899-1900
Nellie K. Patterson	1900-02
Sylvia Yost	1902-03
Mrs. Nellie St. Clair	1903-04
Sadie Belcher	1904-15
Claire Foster	1915-16
Leland Ledbetter	1916-18
Claire Foster Gallagher	1918-19
Sadie Belcher	1919-20
Myrtle Sturgess, Julia Sweet substitutes for Sadie Belcher	

SOURCES

- ¹ "Statement of Daniel P. Rhoads Regarding Relief of the Donner Party." Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California. *Thomas Rhoades spelled his name with an "E" but son John spelled it simply Rhoads.*
 - ² Cothrin, Kitty Sheldon as told to Ellen Cothrin Rosa. "*William Daylor My Grandfather's Friend*," unpublished manuscript, Wilton, California, June 1, 1975.
 - ³ Engs, Beth. "*Rhoads School Collection*," original documents, notes of interviews, photographs, letters, books, artifacts, newspaper clippings and taped interviews, Slough House, California. (Original documents now in possession of the City-County Museum.)
- Ricketts, Norma B. "*Thomas and Elizabeth Rhoades—Pioneers of 1846*," unpublished manuscript, Sacramento, California 1972.
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Thank you for a dream come true.

PLAQUE

1872 RHOADS SCHOOL 1946

Rhoads School, completed in 1872. Located west side of Sheldon Road, now Slough House Road, two miles south of the Jackson Road. Replaced first Rhoads School located north side, near levee of Cosumnes River next to Rhoads southwest property line. School authorized by Jared Dixon Sheldon to provide schooling for area children. Said to be named for John Pierce Rhoads, member of Donner Rescue parties. Ceased operation 1867, for reasons unknown. Funds and students transferred to Union School, next district south during the interim. New school funds raised by subscription within district. Operated until June 1946, when Rhoads, Michigan Bar, Stonehouse and Wilson districts combined to form Cosumnes River Union School District. Moved to present site May 19, 1976.

Dedicated by Liberty Parlor No. 213 Native Daughters of the Golden West, and Elk Grove Parlor No. 41 Native Sons of the Golden West, July 4, 1977.

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1175
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