

EARLY CARLSBAD SCHOOLS

By Susan Gutierrez

I think it was in 1872 that a school district was organized in our neighborhood. It was called Hope District. The neighbors got together and built a little rough wooden schoolhouse. The south boundary was San Eleijo Creek... the north Agua Hedionda Creek... and how far east the district ran I do not know.

— John Kelly, son of Matthew Kelly, homesteader to Los Kiotes Ranch. From his memoirs, *Life on a San Diego County Ranch*

July 14, 1897

Dear Mrs. Shipley,

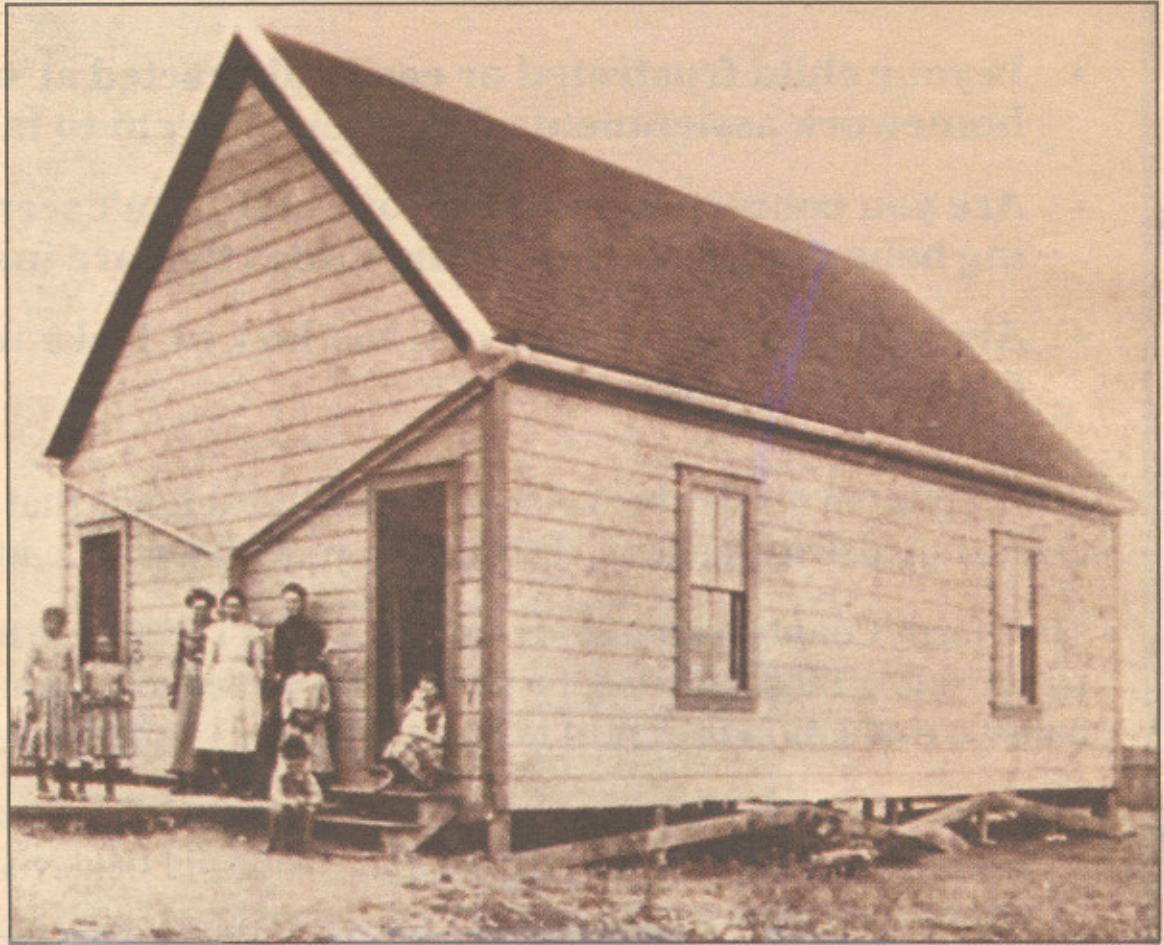
Florence may come up for her first lesson tomorrow morning, if you wish. I was absent longer than I intended to be, so could not begin sooner. In haste.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss Hattie Reece

Memoirs, letters and newspapers furnish much of what we know about the earliest school days in Carlsbad. Families easily organized schools as they were needed and located them in areas

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Calavera School, 1916. From the Allan O. Kelly Collection.

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that were easily accessible for their children. Most of these schools taught up to the eighth-grade level. Many of the teachers stayed for just one year; room and board at a student's home being

part of the salary. Parents who wanted more education for their children had several options. Between 1872 and 1906, the families could move to an area that offered higher education, such as Los Angeles or San Diego, or send their children to boarding school in either of those towns.

After 1906, Carlsbad children were able to attend the new Oceanside-Carlsbad Union High School in Oceanside. It wasn't until 1958 when Carlsbad High School opened, that Carlsbad students could attend all of their school years right in town.

Miss Hattie Reece, one of Carlsbad's best-known teachers, taught at the two-story, four-room Carlsbad School, located on Pine Street in the outskirts of downtown Carlsbad from 1895 until 1927. What made her so well-remembered in town was her long 32-year teaching tenure. Upon her retirement, a block of classrooms was named in honor of her years of instructing Carlsbad youth. During the very earliest years in Carlsbad, teachers came and went with such frequency that most of them had little impact on the community around them. As the town's population dropped, so did student enrollment at the Carlsbad School. The student population fluctuated with the population of the town and reached a low number of five in the late 1890s, when the school almost

closed its doors. Around 1888, local school-age children who lived outside of town were attending the Calavera School, located more conveniently for ranch families such as the Bordens, Marrons and Kellys, at the current site of Calavera Park. The parents of these local families converted an abandoned Minneapolis Beach Community farm house into a school for their children. The families dragged the structure over land by horse from its original location near the current Cannon Road I-5 exit to the school site.



Pine School, 1954. This building was built in the 1920s to replace on the Carlsbad School.

Each of those early schools have been replaced over time. And what ever happened to the girl Florence that Miss Reece was expecting for class? Her parents decided to send her to Our Lady of Peace boarding school in San Diego. Miss Reece married Alfred Schutte, the son of Gerhard Schutte, one of our town founders and had a wing of classrooms at the Carlsbad School named after her—The Hattie R. Schutte Building.

To learn more about Florence Shipley, Miss Hattie Reece,

Carlsbad Schools and other Carlsbad history, please visit the Carlsbad Historical Society at 258 Beech Street in Magee Park on Friday and Saturday from noon to 4 p.m., or call (760) 434-9189 for a private tour.

Susan Gutierrez is a published author and the president of the Carlsbad Historical Society.

Windows on the Past

An Illustrated History of Carlsbad, California



This book written by Susan Gutierrez may be purchased at:

Carlsbad City Library

1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad, CA 92009
(760) 602-2011



Carlsbad School - 1918