

## BACK TO SCHOOL IN POWAY

Very few of the many students who will be returning to school in the fall in the Poway District are aware of the long history of the district. The district formed in 1871 was the 11<sup>th</sup> district to be created in San Diego County. It was perhaps the largest in area in the County, including areas of Escondido to the north, Miramar and Rancho Santa Fe to the west, Lakeside and El Cajon to the south and Ramona to the East. In 1871 the County census revealed that there were approximately 60 children between the ages of five and fifteen in the area.

Where the first classes were held is not known but private homes would be a good guess. With the end of the Civil War in 1865, many Americans headed west and some of them ended up in San Diego County. According to Ray Stock author of "100 Years of Poway Education" published in 1971, there was still lingering bitterness between the new settlers from either the North or the South. For example, if classes were held in the home of a Southern sympathizer, Northern children would not attend. The same was true if classes were held in a Northern home.

In 1876 the location of a school building was recorded as being on Community Road; approximately across from where Walmart is located. It is not clear who the first teachers were, but Stock mentions that John Overshiner took an examination for teaching purposes in 1871. The first year salary was \$55.00 a month. In 1874 a teacher's exam was taken by a Mrs. S.C. Watson from Poway. She was the wife of C.C. Watson, a veteran of the Civil War. Stock feels that classes may have been held in the Watson's home. Enrollment was 20 students but attendance was sporadic. Financing came from the State and the County.

Beginning in 1875 Poway school district started to be broken up. Bernardo to the north had established their own post office and now wanted their own school. Settlers in the southeast also had their own post office at Stowe and wanted their own school. In 1907 Merton (along Pomerado and Poway Roads) formed a school district. A school bond passed in 1885 for \$1,250 allowed for the first publicly owned school building. A photo dated 1890 in the Museum shows the Poway school, a two story building, standing west of the Community Church. The school was remodeled in 1906, removing the second story.

In 1920 the voters in Poway, Merton and Bernardo held an election and voted to form a union, resulting in a new district and the word Pomerado came into being. The "po" was taken from Poway, the "mer" from Merton and the "do" from Bernardo. Some of buildings from the other two sites at Merton and Bernardo were moved to the Community Road site. The Stowe school had been closed earlier due to lack of students. Many of the Stowe settlers had moved on during the "drought" years.

In 1925 a school was erected on Midland Road, replacing the old school on Community. It had two classrooms, an auditorium, kitchen, office, indoor toilets and a basement. Another classroom was added after the building was completed. The new school was named Pomerado but changed names in 1960 to Midland school.

In subsequent years as the enrollment increased a school was built on Pomerado Road (1960), Valley School and Garden Road followed in 1961 and Meadowbrook in 1965. A High School was built on Espola Road in 1961 also. Prior to this High School students were bused to Escondido High School. Since the 60s more schools elementary, middle and high schools have been added to the Poway District. This is a far cry from 1871 when classes were held in private homes.

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