A Celebration of Fresno High's First 100 Years

Fresno High School classes met at the K Street (Emerson) School from 1889 to 1891.

FCCHS Archives
Historical Notes on Fresno’s First High School

The last half of the 1880s was a period of tremendous agricultural and economic expansion for Fresno. The boom period, from 1885 to 1900, saw dramatic changes in every area of the city’s life. In public education, a major step was the establishment of the city’s first high school in 1889. Fresno High School was so named because it served the needs of all the high school students in Fresno.

Fresno High School opened for classes on September 16, 1889 with a student body of 50, three teachers, and three grade levels (ninth, junior and middle). The high school classes met on the second story of the K Street School on the corner of Santa Clara and K (now Van Ness) streets. T.L. Heaton, the superintendent of the Fresno City Schools, served as the first principal. There were seven graduates when the first commencement ceremonies were held in June 1891. During the early years, graduation exercises were held in the elegant Barton Opera House, on Fulton and Fresno streets.

Rapid growth forced relocation of the high school to new quarters in the Central (White) School, which stood on the present site of Memorial Auditorium. This move in 1892 was only temporary, however, because a permanent campus was under construction.

The stately brick high school building with its imposing clock tower was located on O Street between Stanislaus and Tuolumne and opened for classes in September 1896. It is interesting to note that many townspeople complained that the new school was being built “too far out of town.” At a cost of $53,000, the modern plant was equipped with the latest facilities including a gymnasium, theater-style lecture room, a chemical laboratory, and a library, and had a student capacity of 400. There were also reservations regarding the $7,500 price tag for the site. The land was sold years later to Frontier Chevrolet Company for $285,000!

Although the course of study was typical for the time, a “Manual Training” class was established by teacher W.A. Tenney in 1897. Girls were at first allowed to take this combination of industrial arts and drafting courses, but when increasing enrollment excluded some boys, the school trustees removed the girls. The Fresno Morning Republican in October 1898 questioned the addition of fad courses such as “drawing, music, nature study, and modeling.”

The O Street campus was declared overcrowded by 1915. Two other institutions also were holding classes on the site: Junior College starting in 1910 and, in 1911, Fresno Normal School. The new site selected for Fresno High was on Echo Avenue. The three buildings, of classical architectural style, on the new million dollar high school campus were dedicated on February 18, 1922.

By the late 1960s, plans were again being made for expansion of the campus on Echo. With the central facade of its historic building intact, a dramatically altered Fresno High School was rededicated in October 1972.


Above: The “new” campus on Echo Avenue, 1921. FCCHS Archives.
Two Early Graduates Remember Fresno High School

by Cathy Rehart

Several FHS graduates from the early years of the school were located by the Centennial Committee. I had the opportunity to talk to two of them. Excerpts from those visits follow.

Margaret McLane Harris, class of 1910, is the oldest living graduate of Fresno High School. Her father, Charles McLane, was the second principal of FHS, superintendent of the Fresno School District and the founder of the Fresno Normal School and Junior College in 1911. McLane High School was named in his honor.

Mrs. Harris remembers FHS as a very happy place. She was a member of Delta Iota Chi, a national sorority, and much of her social life centered on that organization and on her close circle of friends. Sororities and fraternities had chapters on campus at that time and sponsored most of the dances, which were open to everyone. Bids (tickets) were sold for the dances and programs (dance cards) were given to everyone. The programs had a number beside each dance and at the beginning of the evening, young men signed their names on the cards to assure a dance with girls they admired.

Mr. Olney was the principal. His daughter Bernice would later teach English at FHS for many years. Mrs. Harris' favorite subject was geometry, but her favorite teacher was Johnny Nowell, the history teacher. Art was one of the classes she enjoyed and several years after graduation, she designed a Raisin Day Float for the Parlor Lecture Club.

George Homysy, class of 1919, has fond memories of the FHS campus on O Street. He remembers that the stairs were made of wood and they were so worn that you could feel the indentations as you walked up all three floors. He was the third Homysy child to attend FHS. With the exception of one year, Homysys were at FHS from 1907 to 1922. He remembers that everyone went home for lunch because the school did not have a cafeteria. His favorite teachers and subjects were: Mr. Schnoreenberg, math; Mr. Hockenberry, physics and Mr. Lewis, chemistry.

Students received a classical education. Four years of Latin were required and also two years of a foreign language. Mr. Homysy studied German because at that time Germany was the leader in science and math. However, because of World War I, German was cut out of the curriculum in his sophomore year.

There were four debating societies on campus: Portia and Hypatia for women and the Senate and Agora for men. Mr. Homysy was a member of the Agoras and remembers that they were very friendly with the Portias. On the day of a picnic sponsored by the two clubs, his father let him use the family car, a seven-passenger Hupmobile. On the way he had seven flat tires. The picnics were held at Ward's Oak Park on the King's River.

Loverne Kinsley, wearing her graduation dress, stands beside her grandmother, Laura Amanda Stevens. Loverne graduated from Fresno High in 1896. Photo courtesy of Cathy Rehart.

Athletics also played an important role in the life of the school. The big game of the football season was played against Bakersfield High, Fresno High's biggest rival. In 1919, graduation was held in an auditorium on either Van Ness or Fulton at Kern. It was held at night. There were 198 in the class. Caps and gowns were not worn. The boys wore suits and the girls wore nice dresses. They marched in to music played by the FHS orchestra conducted by Mr. Towner.

After graduating from college as an engineer, Mr. Homysy worked on building the tube between Oakland and Alameda.

Cathy Rehart is a member of a four-generation FHS family. Her grandmother, Loverne Kinsley, graduated with the class of 1896; her mother, Catherine McKay, graduated in 1927; Cathy graduated in 1958; and her son, Bill, graduated in 1983.
Fresno High's Centennial Observance

by Cathy Rehert

The centennial celebration for Fresno's first high school was a year long event. The committee, headed by Bettylee Gingsburg Wapner (class of 1952), planned a series of events for the hundredth year, each event designed to bring back memories of important components of life at Fresno High.

The first event, in the fall of 1988, was a Tailgate Kickoff party. Alumni and students gathered at the John Eules Ballpark for a tailgate supper and festivities. Then everyone marched behind the Fresno High band to Ratcliffe Stadium for the Warrior's opening game of the football season against Sanger High. Richard "Choo Choo" Hodge led about 1,000 alumni in the Warrior yells.

In February, 1989, Prom Night was held at the Fresno Fairgrounds. Three buildings were decorated with themes representing different eras and interests. Country Western, Big Band and Rock n' Roll parties each drew a crowd and the event was termed a great success. As had the tailgate party, Prom Night drew alumni from many different generations.

On April 1, a Sock Hop was held in the Warrior Gym. FHS students were invited to participate. This party was very nostalgic for those of us from the 1950s and '60s eras - the time when rock 'n roll began and noontime sock hops were an important part of social life at school.

The culminating weekend of the year occurred June 16, 17 and 18. Box lunches were available on Friday and Saturday for those alumni who wanted to visit the FHS campus. Golf and tennis tournaments were held and tours of the campus were given. These events turned out to be popular, but the general feeling on the part of those who toured the campus was that the old LeConte and Palmer halls were greatly missed as well as the columned walks that linked these buildings with Royce Hall. Some suggested that the new buildings should have been built in back of Royce Hall, thus preserving the green lawn in front and the classical facade of the original school.

On Friday evening, June 16, TeePee Talent, FHS's yearly showcase of the school's best talent, played to a sold-out audience. The FHS auditorium was filled to the rafters. The opening segment was a pictorial history of TeePee Talent shows from years past (organized by Jerry Laval, '56) featuring the participants in this year's show while Ann Leonardo Thaxter ('55) sang "Memories." Other highlights were Vern Selland ('47) singing "Paper Doll" and "Don't Worry About Me" and a Pep Rally led by Dick Hodge ('50), Bob Hall ('44) and Lonnie Schlegel ('55).

The Gala Celebration, held on Saturday evening, June 17, began with a cocktail party held in the Fresno Convention Center Room next to the Holiday Plaza Hotel. Signs were posted throughout the room designating four-year groupings of classes. It was a wonderful idea because one could easily find one's friends and also spot where to find friends from other years. Two hours passed swiftly and we all (1,600 of us!) walked across M Street to the Convention Center Exhibit Hall where tables for ten had been set for us.

The dinner, catered by Jim Pardini (who prepared the food for all the Centennial events), featured filet mignon, Fresno rice and a log cake decorated in purple and gold. After dinner, Bettylee introduced four past principals, George Holstein, Jack Mulkey, Art Miller and Jeanne Contell. She also presented Ray Baker, the present principal of FHS. Jennie Ramos, the fall and spring student body president of 1989, also was introduced. The two oldest graduates in attendance, John Smale ('17) and Betty Downing Nixon ('18), received standing ovations. Pete Mehas ('57), Assistant to the Governor for Education; Darlene Trafican Laval ('56), Trustee on the Board of Education; and Joe Levy ('50) and his wife Sharon, Supervisor for Fresno County, were introduced. Each class from 1917 to 1989 was asked to stand — nearly all were represented! Next, a musical program led by Paul Anderson ('47) and featuring the Choraliers was featured.

The highlight of the evening was the singing of the Alma Mater. As we stood, so many eras and memories represented, and sang together those wonderful words: "Our strong band can ne'er be broken formed in Fresno High; Far surpassing wealth unspoken, sealed by friendship's tie. When in future years we're turning leaves of memory, then we'll find our hearts returning Fresno High to thee. Raise the chorus, speed it onward till the hills reply, Hail to thee, our Alma Mater, hail to Fresno High!" I was struck by how truly those words summed up the feelings of us all.

The final event was a breakfast the next morning held in the FHS cafeteria (better known as the Warrior Waldorf) that was a sell-out, also. Everyone agreed that the celebrations had been a tremendous success and all who participated in the planning were to be commended.
FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Fresno Historical Society Archives houses a wealth of information on historic Fresno High School. The Fresno High School photograph collection numbers 130 images and details the school’s activities including sports, clubs, events, academics, faculty, and the two campuses. Most of the group and individual portrait photographs were taken by the Fresno studio of Maxwell and Mudge.

The collection of “The Owl,” the monthly student publication, encompasses the years from 1896 to 1947. Ephemera, or items from many different facets of school life, includes a wonderful collection of dance programs and cards from social events. The Fresno High Centennial Committee made extensive use of the photograph collection for the Centennial Yearbook publication celebrating Fresno High School’s 100th birthday.

The archival collection documenting the life of Fresno High School has expanded through the generosity of many donors. The Historical Society is grateful to the generations of Fresno High graduates for their donations of Fresno High history to the Archives.
Fresno High Anecdotes by a Member of the First Graduating Class

This excerpt from 120° In The Shade (And No Shade) is reprinted by permission of the editor, Alice Chaddock Yvanovich. She is the granddaughter of the author, the late Emory Leroy Chaddock. The recently-released book is available at the Society gift shop and area book stores.

In The Old White School House

Soon after my arrival in Fresno I began attending school in the big three-story frame building later known as the Old White School House. It was located on the spot on which Fresno's Memorial Auditorium was later built.

Mr. Kenyon was superintendent of White School and Mrs. Abbey Curran was his assistant. Mrs. Curran was a very capable teacher whose special talent was teaching Latin. She taught for many years in Fresno and later was my wife's teacher in Easton.

Most teachers have some weakness, I've observed, and you can leave it to teenage boys and girls to discover that weakness and take advantage of it. As I remember there were three of us in her Latin class. Olive Vogel (later Mrs. Charles McCardle) sat at one end of the class, Tracy Kelly (son of the Episcopal minister) in the middle, and I at the other end. It did not take us long to discover that Mrs. Curran always began by asking Ollie to start translating the Latin lesson. Then she called on Tracy for the middle and finally came to me for the last of the translation. All three of us were strong believers in the practice of conservation of energy, for each of us studied only that part of the lesson we were sure she would ask us to translate.

To our good fortune, I remember her reversing this system only two or three times during the whole year. Of course, when she took that notion, Ollie and I were sunk and had to manufacture an alibi to account for our failure. Tracy, on the other hand, had the advantage over us as Mrs. Curran never did start in the middle of the row.

School Opens With A Tragedy

The summer of 1889 was the beginning of Fresno's first real high school. We students were all transferred to the new building on South K street now known as the Emerson School. The school was a hodgepodge of architecture and construction if there ever was one; within two years it was condemned as unsafe and had to be partially rebuilt.

On the opening day of school, a terrible tragedy befell the elder of the two Church brothers, whom I had met several years previously in Hinsdale, Illinois. On that first day of school, a large percentage of the pupils arrived nearly

The first student body of Fresno High School, 1889. FCCHS Archives.

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I felt as if he were glaring a hole right through me. “No sir!” replied Yours Truly. “I don’t believe I ever carved my name in a desk in my life. Come to think of it, I may possibly have written my name in ink on those desks but I don’t believe I ever carved my name in a single one of them.”

“Well, come to think of it, you’re right. Your name was written, not carved; but let me tell you something, young man. If I ever see your name written on any of the desks of this school, you and I are going to have some trouble.” That interview certainly put the “fear of God” into little Leroy.

And that first introduction to Professor Heaton did nothing to improve the impression I’d already received at church the previous day. But how those impressions changed. Within a month, I doubt if there was a pupil in the school who didn’t love and respect him. He was a most remarkable man and teacher. One of Professor Heaton’s most impressive characteristics was his phenomenal memory. When we studied Shakespeare, he could not only recite it by the yard, but could tell you the scene and page in the volume from which he was quoting.

Some years later, it was rumored that the School Board was seriously considering a change and was seeking another superintendent. When his pupils heard the rumor, they formed a procession and marched down to City Hall to protest. As I remember, Professor Heaton stayed on another year. Then he received a call to become Professor of Pedagogy at the University of California in Berkeley, California, where he established an equally wonderful record.

Shortly before his death, I met him once again when he visited Fresno. Though many years had intervened, Professor Heaton still remembered me and all those in my class and inquired about them by name. After his death, I read in a San Francisco paper a long letter of appreciation and praise of his career at the university.

A Teacher Ahead Of Her Time

While on the subject of our schools, I must relate rather an amusing situation that developed the second year I attended Fresno High School. We had a young lady teacher named Miss Lena Hilkie. Miss Hilkie was a very attractive young lady and an excellent teacher. She had, as I recall, just graduated from the University of California at Berkeley.

All of us boys were agreed that Miss Hilkie had a very shapely figure, particularly her limbs. I almost said legs, but in those days a young lady was not supposed to have legs. At the very least, she was not to show them. But we all observed that she had very trim limbs. I know she did, as I saw them; at least I saw them up about halfway to her knees, as she accidentally showed them about twice a day in riding to and from school on her bicycle. I think hers was one of the first ladies’ bicycles that had been seen in Fresno. She and her bicycle created quite a sensation around town.

We boys were particularly delighted at watching her mount her wheel, as in doing so she often displayed her limbs as much as a foot up from her ankle. While we were interested, the older generation was scandalized at this display. Immediately, petitions from many of the church
people began to pour into the Board of Education, protesting against her audacity in setting such as example to the youth of our community.

The very idea of a young lady showing her limbs half or two thirds the way up to her knees — in public, no less — was too scandalous to be allowed to continue. Miss Hilkie was called before the School Board on which sat Judge M. K. Harris, George E. Church, and some others whom I fail to remember. She was notified that she would either be obliged to quit riding her bicycle to school or give up her position as teacher.

Now, Miss Hilkie was rather a stubborn young lady and evidently a believer in women's rights; she refused to take either course. There was nothing the Board could do about it as she was breaking no law. They had to allow her to finish her term, though she was not reappointed the coming year.

Time marches on and our ideas of the proprieties have certainly undergone a revolutionary change; whether for better or worse is still a debatable question among the older generation, raised as we were under the influence of the Victorian age. I'd say Miss Hilkie was a martyr born thirty years too soon.

The Fresno High School Senate

It is rewarding to know that I was one of the three boys who founded the Fresno High School Senate. A unique public school organization in our state, the Senate celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on March 9, 1940. In 1890, DeWitt H. Gray, Ed F. Greeley and I, members of the first graduating class, discussed the possibility of forming a debating society in connection with the High School. I must give the credit for suggesting the idea of a senate to DeWitt Gray.

DeWitt had recently arrived in Fresno from Syracuse, New York. While living there had heard of a debating society organized as a Senate. He felt it would be an excellent idea to form our club along similar lines. We decided to call a meeting of the high school boys to discuss this idea and the result was its adoption and organization.

Modeling ourselves after the U.S. Senate, each member selected a state to represent. We decided to elect Professor T. L. Heaton as "President of the United States," and Frank M. Lane as "Vice President and presiding officer of the Senate." Organized a year after the establishment of the High School, the Senate installed its first panel of officers on March 21, 1890.

My memory is that DeWitt Gray was elected assistant vice president of the Senate, E. F. Greeley was elected secretary, Al Olney became treasurer, with Guy Dusenberry appointed as door keeper and sergeant-at-arms.

I believe the records show that Miss Florence Bartling, our English teacher, drafted the constitution. There were seventeen charter members. An article in the Fresno Bee reported that the first elected (FHS) President of the United States was Thos. L. Heaton, Superintendent of Schools, who "...continued to approve or veto the Senators' bills for six years." Other prominent Fresnans mentioned as having served in that capacity were Chester H. Rowell, who taught German and mathematics in the school, and Charles L. McLane, who later became the first president of Fresno State College.

The same article shows a picture of "Yours Truly" shaking hands with Gordon Levy, the immediate past president. The notation in the headlines claimed that the Fresno High School Senate is believed to be the oldest debating society in the United States and that I have the honor of being the only surviving organizer.

The primary objective of the organization was to make its members familiar with parliamentary rules and practices. The first expenditure from the treasury was the purchase of a copy of Robert's Rules of Order. "Bills" were passed and were either signed into "law" or vetoed by the president. I don't remember ever passing a law over the president's veto; possibly we did not have the regulation that it could be done by a two-thirds vote.

There was no jealousy existing between the executive and legislative branches of our "government" such as exists today in Washington. Perhaps Washington could profit by observing our more conciliatory methods of conducting governmental affairs. Our debates were not always peaceable, however, as at times the debates on politics were apt to follow the example set by the U.S. Congress. Nonetheless, I fail to remember that our sergeant-at-arms was ever called upon to quell any serious disturbance.

Professor Heaton was a wonderful instructor and guide to us boys, and we all loved and respected him. In debating politics, he was particularly clever. The following incident will illustrate his methods of diplomacy.

Joe Bernard was at that time a "died in the wool" Democrat and Ed Greeley was an equally ardent Republican. In the course of a discussion about the tariff, Prof. Heaton turned to Greeley and asked, "Ed, what are you, a Republican or a Democrat?"

To this, Ed replied proudly, "I'm a Republican."

"Well, Ed, tell us why you are a Republican."

Ed made a somewhat feeble attempt in the way of political argument. When Ed had concluded, Professor Heaton started in and tore Ed's arguments into shreds, making about as fine a Democratic speech as I ever listened to.

A week or so later, he brought up the subject again and, turning to Joe Bernard, said, "Joe, what are your politics, Republican or Democrat?"

Joe emphatically declared he was a Democrat.

"Well, Joe, let us hear why you are a Democrat."

Joe evidently had a good memory and succeeded in making quite a brilliant argument, quoting much of Professor Heaton's speech; he appeared quite pleased with himself. Prof. Heaton then turned on Joe and tore that speech into shreds even more vigorously than he had done to Ed's. Following that, Prof. Heaton gave a brilliant Republican speech, making Joe's speech look like a tin can on a rifle range.

None of us could ever guess whether Professor Heaton was a Republican or Democrat. Soon afterwards, Joe Bernard became an ardent Republican. I have often wondered whether that speech had "converted" him. Joe tells me he doesn't remember the episode I have just related though I remember it well.

The 50th anniversary of the founding of the FHS Senate drew former senators from all parts of the state. Several hundred attended the celebration and it was a wonderful
experience to be able to renew acquaintances with so many of those old time Senators. It was a most jolly and festive occasion and one I will long remember.

Many of the senators became prominent in our city and state and I feel proud to have shared in starting an organization which may have contributed to their successful careers. I have often wondered, though, why this idea has not been adopted in other schools throughout the country.

I might mention that my son, Albert E. Chaddock, was a member of the High School Senate as well as my grandson, Albert Baird Chaddock. In fact, I was honored to administer the oath of membership to my grandson, Albert Baird Chaddock, during the occasion of the 58th Senate reunion.

An Oration To Be Remembered

Everyone as he grows older seems to like to reminisce about old times and I find I am no exception. I started these annals rather dreading the work I knew it would involve. Strange to say, I am beginning to enjoy recalling and writing about some of these early episodes. I cannot refrain from telling one story on myself describing how I made a speech that was, in my opinion, at least, perhaps the most popular speech made in those early Fresno days. Conceited, you say? Well, I'll let the reader be the judge.

My oration was delivered in 1891 before an audience that packed the old Barton Opera House on graduation night. Ours was the first class to graduate from the new Fresno High School, so it was a very important occasion. There were seven of us in the class. I still have the picture of this class. It consisted of Olive Vogel, Russie Martin, Julie Roff, Mable Cory, DeWitt H. Gray, Edward F. Greeley and myself.

Each of the young ladies was required to read an essay and each of us boys had to deliver an oration. It was a lengthy program to say the least. But that was not all. First on the program was a speech by the honorable Chairman of the Board of Education, George E. Church. All who remember him, recall that he was a very gifted orator, though he had the reputation of being somewhat long-winded and rather ponderous and slow in his delivery.

As I recall it, he talked for nearly an hour, or until the audience began to get more than a little fidgety. Then came some not too brief remarks by others on the Board. Then the County Superintendent of Schools was called upon for a few remarks. Those speeches were all preliminary to the main event: our essays and orations.

The Superintendent began his speech by reaching into his inside coat pocket and taking out a huge manuscript; you can imagine the sighs that emanated from the audience, which was greatly relieved when he put the manuscript back in his pocket and began his speech as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen, on this auspicious and important occasion, I felt it incumbent on me to prepare rather a lengthy address; but as we have already heard several remarkably fine talks from those who have preceded me, I have decided not to inflict this speech upon you. We still are to hear from the Graduation Class, and as the hour is growing late, I shall confine myself to a few extemporaneous remarks." He then proceeded with those extemporaneous remarks for nearly an hour. More fidgets and sighs.

At last our class got its chance to entertain the audience. The girls, of course, were very properly given precedence, and each read her rather long essay in a very creditable manner. Then came the three orations: First DeWitt Gray, second Ed Greeley, and last, Yours Truly. These orations were not too short and mine was the longest and, to my mind, of course, the best.

My English teacher, Miss Florence Bartling, after observing my feeble efforts as a writer, had decided that I
needed considerable assistance. She had eliminated most of my writing and substituted her own. In other words she was my "ghost writer." I still have that manuscript in my scrap album. In reading it recently, I couldn't help admiring the oratorical effects she gave it on the opening and closing pages, which she rightly stated were the most important parts of any speech. Most of the "innards" in between were in my language. My subject was "Arbitration as a Means of Settling International Disputes" — a very weighty subject, indeed.

When my turn came, a man advancing to a scaffold to be hung never had any weaker knees than I. I was scared almost but not quite speechless. I managed somehow to get to the front of the stage; but the more I viewed that vast audience, the more panicky I became. However, I succeeded in getting a start.

My speech was about fourteen foolscap pages long. I recited the first page without a mistake and, feeling I was getting along fine, braced up accordingly; but suddenly I got a glimpse of my chum, Ed Fernald, who was holding my manuscript off in the side wing of the auditorium. Ed was supposed to prompt me if I happened to forget my lines. When I observed him frantically turning the pages of my speech, it suddenly dawned on me that I had jumped from the first page to the last page, and had left out all the rest. Fortunately, I retained sense enough to proceed without a break; in fact, I displayed unusual vigor in the last paragraph and wound up the speech in a blaze of oratory I had little dreamed I possessed.

I have heard many famous speakers applauded in my day, but seldom have I heard such enthusiastic applause as greeted the conclusion of my oration and, to the audience's even greater delight, the end of the program.

I doubt if anyone in that audience had grasped a single sentence of my speech or knew what I was talking about. They were simply numb and brain fogged as a result of the long program that preceded my effort. Apparently no one noticed my long omission. Even Miss Bartling, who wrote most of it, failed to catch the error. Professor Heaton congratulated me on my success, completely unaware of my unintended brevity, though I had rehearsed the whole speech before him twice in preparation for the grand event.

Everyone complimented me on the short, snappy, and effective speech I'd made. Far be it from me to disillusion any of them. So I have always patted myself on the back that I pulled off one of the most popular speeches delivered anywhere.

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An Editorial From *The Owl*, March 1918

In the spring of 1896 some enterprising H. S. boys proposed the publication of a High School paper. They knew how valuable a paper filled with school wit and wisdom would be. The selection of a title was the first consideration. To show its humorous nature, some one suggested that it be called the "Little Joker." As it was doubtful, however, whether there would be much wisdom in the contents, it was decided to embody it in the title. The paper was named *The Owl* after a large mounted owl, perched in the assembly room, the guardian spirit of the school.

The first copy of *The Owl* was printed by mimeograph and twenty-six copies were issued on March 17th. Everett Seward and Harry Lattimer of the class of '96 were the editors and Roy Woodward of the same class was the business manager.

This number contained six pages. The second number appeared on March 30th. This issue had eight pages and a cover. Later the same year it was decided to print *The Owl* and advertisements were solicited. From then on the bird has made flights, some high and others low, but always with the school's interests at heart.

So March 17th of this month was the twenty-second anniversary of *The Owl*. It has had that many editors and business managers, and has had associated with it hundreds of students.

Perhaps the bird has slumbered at some periods during these twenty-two years, for *The Owl* does not choose its managers, and so it does not agree with all; but the spirit is still there and the bird is still alive. When thinking of *The Owl* do not think of students who happened to be with it then, but of that spirit that it has, of devoting its interests to you and the school at large.
A Winning Campaign Speech

I will have to admit that a year or two after receiving "acclaim" as an orator, I had a very close rival for this reputation in the person of Joe Spinney, one of Fresno's first mayors. I think Joe, or "Spin," as he was familiarly called, was in actuality the chairman of the Board of Trustees, for I think Fresno had not yet been incorporated at that time. At any rate, Joe was running for that office.

I knew Joe fairly well and several times purchased his raisins in later years. He was a sheepman who had become prosperous. His large brick kiln south of town supplied the city with much of the brick that the trustees needed in building some of our public buildings.

Joe spoke the Portuguese language fluently, but his command of English was, to say the least, quite picturesque, especially when he was the least bit excited. It was said that he could not write even his own name; my memory of him is that he was obliged to "make his mark" on the contracts we made. But Joe was smart, and I always felt that he made a good mayor in many ways.

Anyone who remembers those good old political days will have to admit that the art of politics in Fresno was not conducted on a very high plane. And it is not much of a compliment to Joe to say that he was up to the general average. Graft scandals were frequent and the old triangle of Fahey, Cole and Alford was constantly on the front pages of the local papers as being mixed up in one shady deal or another. You must remember that Fresno was still "wild and woolly" and, consequently, got about the kind of government it deserved. Joe was a Republican and Republicans were not too plentiful in this neck of the woods.

As election day approached, it was my feeling that energy would be conserved if the candidates for office, both Republican and Democratic alike, were herded together in one big hall and allowed to display their oratory and give an account of their stewardship before the assembled voters. In order not to burden my readers with too many details of the meeting, suffice it to say that quite a load of oratory was gotten off the chest of such of our noted orators as W. D. Grady, Reel Terry, Senator Goucher, Judge Harris, Frank Short and others in support of their various candidates; and also, by the candidates themselves.

Toward the end of the program, the Chairman called upon "one of our prominent and leading citizens..." to make a speech. It was none other than Joe Spin. It was evident that Joe didn't expect to be called upon, as some of his lawyer friends had already pleaded his case for him. Seemingly quite flabbergasted, Joe advanced to the front of the platform on which all the rival candidates were sitting. He spoke something like this: "Fellow citizens, tonight I hear a lotta fine talk. They all sure use a lotta big words a plenta. I no can speaka da English yerra mooch, and I never maka da speech before, but, by God, my heart he beat like a son-of-a-bitch for the Republican party!"

To give added effect to this flight of oratory, Joe beat on his stomach where perhaps he thought his heart was located, and then had the good sense to sit down. Joe's unpracticed eloquence undoubtedly had more effect on the audience than all his lawyer friends' oratory on his behalf. That speech, they said, elected Joe over his Democratic opponent.
The following list of other Fresno high schools and their opening dates was compiled by Bill Secrest, Jr. from "History of Public School Organization and Administration in Fresno County, California," Ed.D. dissertation by John Allan Dow, 1967.

Edison Technical High School was the second formed in the Fresno Unified district. It began as an elementary school in 1915, then became an intermediate school in 1917. First principal was W.L. Potts.

Roosevelt High School was planned in 1920, completed in 1928. First principal was W.A. Otto.

McLane High School opened in 1959. First principal was Paul Easterbrook.

Hoover High School opened in 1963. First principal was Richard P. Neal.

Bullard High School, with Vernon Walker as principal, was annexed to the Fresno Unified district in 1959 in the Bullard Unified election (see below).

Fresno Evening High School was an outgrowth of the expanded evening school department organized by the district in 1910. The high school itself opened in 1918 with W.M. Cowan as its first principal. It was subsequently known as the Fresno Adult School.

Fresno Continuation High School was organized in the old Burbank school on Merced street in 1925. In 1926, it was named E.R. Snyder Continuation High School for an early-day continuation high school teacher. On April 27, 1961, it was renamed in honor of Superior Court Judge George M. DeWolf, who spent his career working with youth.

Bullard Unified District was formed on July 1, 1952, after residents voted 409-50 to form it. The district had no high school classes until 1955; resident students of high school age went to Fresno High School, Central Union High School and Clovis High School. Weston Alt was named district superintendent in 1954, became first principal of Bullard Junior-Senior High School in 1955; school offered classes for grades 7-10 at that time. Bullard Unified voters decided to annex themselves to the Fresno Unified district on January 21, 1958.