

History of the Camp Verde Unified School District, No. 28

Yavapai County Education Service Agency

According to the Yavapai County Education Service Agency the Camp Verde School District, No 28 was established on April 4, 1894. According to an article by "The Journal, History of Camp Verde Schools", the "Unified" part of its name was only acquired in 1975.

A School at Fort Verde?

Why would the military have a school at the fort? It was a time of respect for education. The average American citizen had only a 5th grade education but they could certainly read and write. What was the reason for continuing education? Actually it was a theme for recruiting men into the army. The army would teach you to read and write and therefore you would have a better chance at success when your tour of duty was over. Many of the recruits for the Indian Wars were from Germany and a few other European countries. They were 'required to be conversant in the English language'. And so the fort had a school for the enlisted men and also for the children. Army regulations concerning the post school were established in 1881.

The school could be attended by any member of the personnel at the fort and it was usually taught by some better educated enlisted men. Because the teacher was not an officer the children seldom attended. They were mostly taught at home during the day while the military men attended school at night.

Classes went on for about two hours and taught reading, writing, arithmetic, some history and geography and, of course, helped the men to learn English. The army really helped the men for civilian life.

The teacher kept classes at the fort but when the soldiers were in the field, teaching continued for the men on campaign. This system continued until 1887, a few years before Fort Verde was abandoned.

The first civilian school was in Cottonwood and was established in 1877. Beaver Creek School was established in 1879. Both sites were too far for children to attend. Finally in 1892 Miss Calista Woods began teaching in the former Quartermaster Storehouse of the abandoned fort.

In 1894 snow from a blizzard was so heavy that the roof of the storehouse caved in. Clear Creek school was built in 1898-1905. The old Fort Administration building was used as an Indian School from 1905-1915. Both the Clear Creek School and the Administration building at the fort are on the National Register of Historical Places.

History of Verde Valley Schools

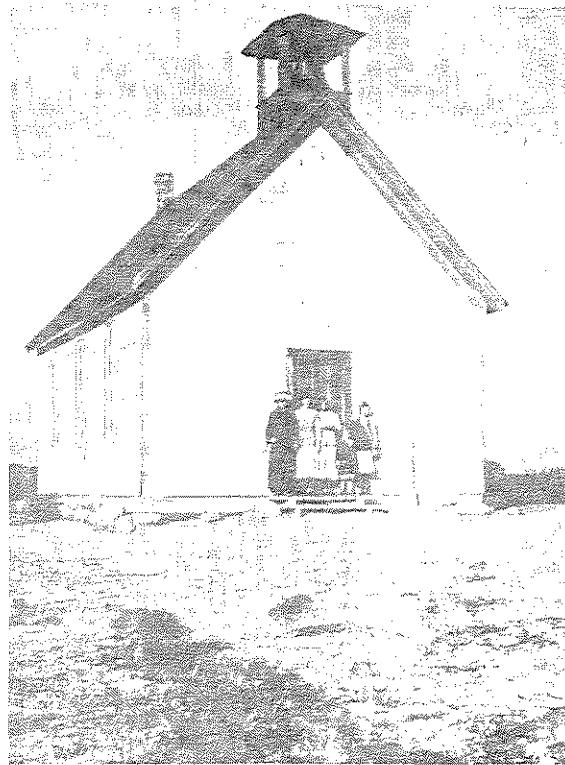
Prior to 1895, there were several schools in operation south of town. There was the Lower Verde School, the Squaw Peak School and the Clear Creek School. To the north, there was the Middle Verde School, the Beaver Creek School, the Montezuma School and the Marr School. All of these schools, both north and south of Fort Verde, were small and widely scattered, divided by the river and the matter of transportation. There was no school at the Fort Verde Post most of the time the military was there, and the children of the military were sent to the Clear Creek School.

Marr School Unfortunately, as with many of the early schools in the Valley, there appears to be no record of when this school was started. It was organized as District No. 10 in 1895, and the address of the school was recorded as Aultman, Arizona. Flora Weatherford was the teacher. Miss Weatherford later married Robert Finnie whose name is familiar to all of us now because of Finnie Flat Road. The Marr School became the West Verde District No. 34 School in 1906, and apparently a new school building was

erected near the old Marr School. What happened after 1906 remains unclear, but that school no doubt ended when the children were sent into the Camp Verde school

Rutherford School No records exist of this school and it was probably a temporary school set up by local ranchers. It was located at the small settlement of Rutherford south of present Verde Lakes Estates and Fort Lincoln Estates maybe in the River Bend area. There was a Rutherford post office.

Clear Creek School Organized as District No. 3, the Clear Creek School was in operation as early as December 7, 1876, as evidenced by a "Card Merit" issued to Hettie Davidson under that date. The first record of the Clear Creek School was for the school year 1884-85. G.W. Nash was the teacher and there were 14 boys and girls enrolled. One of its first school buildings was in a cabin on the W.G. Wingfield ranch. Later the school was moved to a site near the Clear Creek Cemetery in 1894 or 1895. When the Clear Creek Church building became available (now located on South Old Church Road) at the time the church and its activities moved to the present location of the United Methodist church. School was held in the old church building and 1943-44 was the last term of school taught there. They joined with the Camp Verde School at that time.



THE CLEAR CREEK SCHOOL HOUSE — Organized as District No. 3, the Clear Creek School was in operation as early as Dec. 7, 1876, as evidenced by a "Card Merit" issued to Hettie Davidson under that date. The first school was held in a cabin on the W.G. Wingfield place. The school pictured was built in the early 1880s. District No. 3 was annexed to the Camp Verde School in 1906.

Indian Agency School The Indian Agency School was operated by the agency is what is now the Visitors Center at Fort Verde. Taylor Gabbard and his wife were the principal and teacher, aided by several members of the Indian community. The school was in operation in the early 1900s, possibly from 1907 to 1910, when most of the children went to the Middle Verde School.

Middle Verde School This school was organized as District No. 8 in 1879. We quote from "Pioneer Stories of the Verde Valley"; "According to Link Smith, one of our oldest pioneers, Ewan Smith was the

first teacher and taught at the Middle Verde School from 1877-78. Dan Robinson was another of the very early teachers. Records show that the greatest number of pupils attended this school of any of the early schools in the Valley.”

Montezuma School In the records available at the County School Superintendent’s office, a Montezuma School District No. 22 was organized in 1895. Florence Dukes was the first teacher, followed by Charlotte Acker. When Margaret Hallett researched the early schools in 1953, she noted that “I have talked to several people regarding this school. No one seems to know where it was located or remembers anything about it.”

Squaw Peak School The children from the west side of the Verde River attended the Lower Verde (later Clear Creek) School until 1891-92. That year a separate school was organized on the west side and was named Camp Verde District No. 24. George W. Hance was the first clerk of this District, and the first teacher was Ida F. Williams. She was paid \$65 a month for a six-month school year. The school was listed as poorly supplied with buildings, furniture and apparatus. The records also show that in 1893 \$125 was spent to purchase a building site, but a footnote to the record states that no building was erected. In 1894-95 the District number was changed to No. 2 and in 1898, the name of the school was changed to the Squaw Peak School and the District to No. 24. It remained as such until the school closed in 1910.

Some of our District’s First Teachers

Ms. Calista Woods was the first teacher for the District. At the start of the District’s existence, the District did not own a school building, but rented the old Fort Verde building that had served as a hospital for the post. In 1897, the Camp Verde School had two teachers for the first time, according to the records. J.N. and Kate Piper were the teachers and they were paid a combined salary of \$100 per month.



Miss Woods was 24 years old and had come from Kansas. She arrived at the Squaw Peak School in the fall of 1888, and taught two terms there. She then taught for only two terms at Clear Creek School, then five terms at Camp Verde and was married (to John Bristow in 1897).

Margaret Hallett taught in the Clear Creek School from 1936-40, and from 1941-43, when she started teaching in the Camp Verde School.

Some of our District’s First Students

In 1900: Tom Hunt, Norvel Cherry, Olie Gillette, Roy Gillett, Edna Price, Etta Vanderen, Ethel Price, Eva Hance, Minnie Wingfield, Flora Gillett, Bob Guthrie, Jim Wingfield, Mick Wright, Geo Wright,

Myrtle Cherry, Larry Vanderan, Lucille Ketcheraide, Etta Wright, Gladys Gregg, Maude Ann Guthrie, Ena Morris, May Norwood, Roy Vanderan, Hillary Harbeson, Parker Wright, Floyd Gillett, Carl Cherry, Hillary Ketcherside, Alma Turner, Edna Harbeson, Mabel Stephens, Anne Wright, Gene Turner, Libby Gillett, Marguerite Stephens, and Elizabeth Callaway.

1900 Camp Verde School



1900 Camp Verde School, Lucy B. Ho-ler, Teacher.
 Top Row:
 Miss C. Mader, Tom Hunt, Naomi Cherry, Ode Gillett,
 Roy L. Harb, Cuba Brin, Edna Vanderan, Elmer Price, Edna Hunt,
 Mabel Wright, Phoe Gillett.
 2nd Row:
 Miss L. B. ...
 Myrtle Cherry, Larry Vanderan, Lucille Ketcheraide, Edna Wright,
 Gladys Gregg, Maude Ann Guthrie, Anne Wright, Gene Turner,
 Libby Gillett, Marguerite Stephens, Elizabeth Callaway.

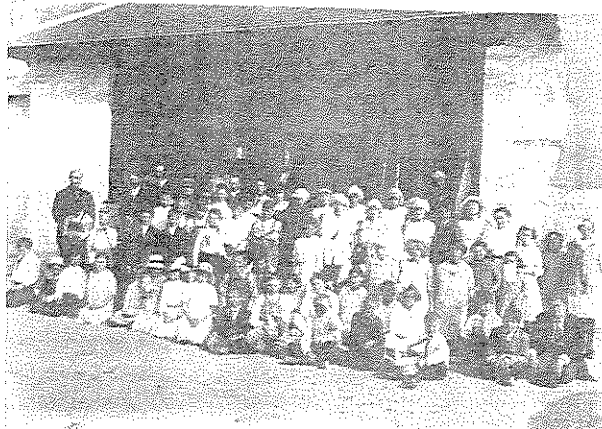
Photos
 by
 Dan Bell

In 1912: Ralph Reid; Ethel Perkins Godard; Nellie Perkins Hough; Jesse Goddard; Ora Sullivan McDonald; Ira Goddard; Bernice Maxwell Maders; Harold Richards; Bernice Maxwell; Herbert Reid; Theodore Wingfield; Mae Cox; Edith Murdock; Zeta and Lester Spear; Walter and Wesley Wingfield; Nellie Maxwell; Roy, Lula, Mildred and Gary Fields; Lucille Oliphant; Hazel and Johnny Richards; Bob, Lendora and Lillie Condor; Opal and Floyd Smith; Hazel and Dollie Bruner.

In 1914-15: Joe Benedict, Vince Wingfield, Sam Benedict, Thelma Burkes, Stella Dickison, Esther Cherry, Ruth Wingfield, Mildred Wingfield, Frank Bristow, Donald Wilson, David Weber, Lee Witter, Grace Sullivan, Ellen Harbeson, Raymond Weber, Kathryn Gilbert, Johnny Bristow, Mary Holder, Ina Martin, Jeff Witter, Howard Wingfield, La Mont Holder, Woody Bristow, Hazel Bruce, Charles Taylor, Theron Witter, Franklin Benedict, Elwin Fain, Margaret Wingfield, Vera Nichols, Ora Sullivan, Gracie Wilson, Jessie Wingfield, Ethel Newfold, Harry Wingfield, Norman Fain, Aubrey Tompkins, Alvin Tompkins, Sam Miller, Lyman (Joe Bill) Harbeson, Irene Miller, Opal Smith, Salina Miller, G.W. Derrick, J.T. Taylor, Ed Mulholland, Mildred Fain, Jewell Bussell, Harness Taylor, Harold Richards, Vernon Harbeson, Grace Gilbert, Goswick, Hazel Richards, Dorothy Sullivan, Hattie Burket, Lucy Miller, Norman Gilbert, and Laura Caruthers.

*Camp Verde School
1914-15*

Pictured in this photo are Principal G.W. Derrick on far left, back row. Next to him are board members Dr. J.T. Taylor, Ed Mathelland, and Mildred Fain, and teacher Jewell Bussell. Heads. Identification of students and administrators was made by Margaret Wingfield Hallett who herself was a student and is in the picture. Bottom row, seated from left to right: Joe Benedict, Ulrice Wingfield, Sam Benedict, Thelma Burkes, Stella Dickson, Esther Cherry, Ruth Wingfield, Mildred Wingfield, Frank Bristow, Donald Wilson, David Weber, Lee Witter, Grace Sullivan, Ellen Harrison, Raymond Weber, Kathryn Gilbert, Johnny Bristow, Mary Holder, Ina Martin, Jeff Witter (boy seated holding hat), Howard Wingfield, La Merit Holder, Woody Bristow and Hazel Bruce on right in window. Second row: Charles Taylor, Theren Witter (Pottar), Franklin Benedict, Elsie Fain, Margaret Wingfield, Vera Nichols, Ora Sullivan, Gracie Wilson, Jessie Wingfield, and Lorna Wingfield. Third Row: Ethel Newfold, Harry Wingfield, Norman Fain, Aubrey Tompkins, Alvis Tompkins, Sam Miller,

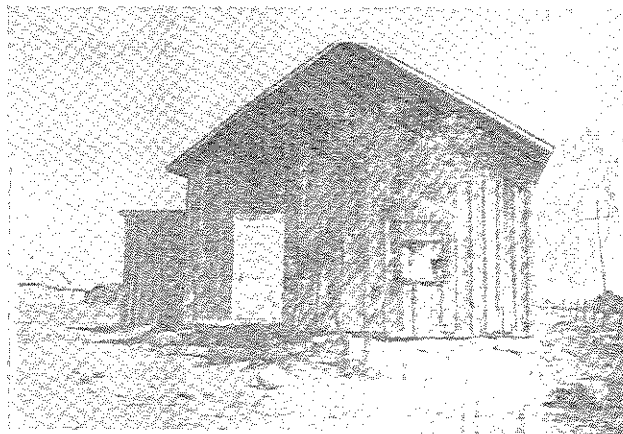


Courtesy of the Camp Verde Historical Society

Leman (Joe Bill) Harbeson, Irene Miller, Opal Smith, and Selma Miller. Fourth row: G.W. Derrick, Dr. J.T. Taylor, Ed Mathelland, John Heath, Harness Taylor, Harold Richards, Vernon Harbeson, Grace Gilbert, Geewick, Hazel Richards, Lucy Miller, Norman Gilbert, Laura Carothers, Mrs. G.W. Derrick, Elsie Sullivan, and Hattie Sullivan.

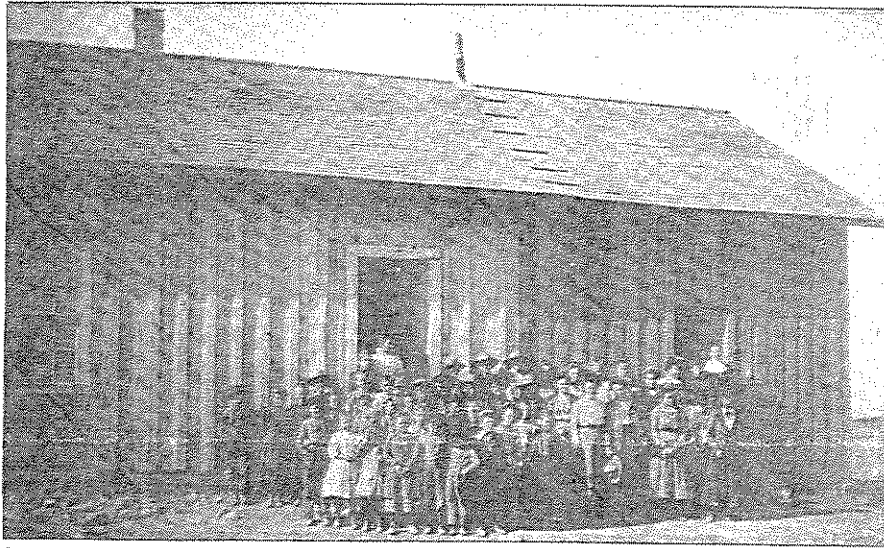
History of District Buildings

In 1900 the condition of the Camp Verde School was listed in the County Superintendent's report as "poor to middling." Sometime between 1900 and 1914, the district acquired what was called "the old green building". It was located about where the present gym on Hollamon Street is, and was probably one of the old post buildings. It had two rooms and a basement, and Margaret Wingfield Hallett, who started school in the post hospital building, says she remembers when she was in the third grade that she with other children would go down into the cellar and read letters and papers left there by the soldiers.



"The Old Green Building"

Originally, one of Fort Verde's buildings, it was on the site of the gymnasium built in 1949-50. The little frame school building had two classrooms. In the left background can be seen the west end of the present Visitors Center at the state park.

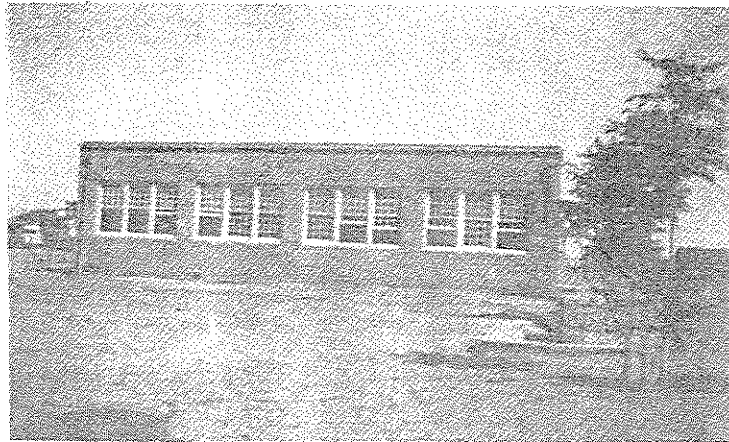


Camp Verde School about 1905. The frame building, with two rooms, was situated east of the gym at the old high school. It was referred to as "the old green building." Teachers were sisters Jennie and Gertha Munds.

In 1902, the school's valuation increased from \$100 to \$1400, and the increase may have been due to the acquisition of the green building. This year also was the first record of library books being owned by the District.

In 1915, Mrs. Hallett says she went to the fourth grade and her class was in the rock building (currently the Camp Verde Historical Society), the oldest section of the school on Main Street. She remembers there were two rooms in front and one just back of them. There were accordion-type partitions between the rooms.

High School Growth was slow in the Camp Verde School District. However, in 1918, the beginning of a high school was built at the demand of Camp Verde residents. Superintendent Sam Hammerstrom said that in that bond election, 17 votes were cast and they were all "Yes". The bond was for \$6,000 to be paid off in 20 years. Just three rooms and an office but it was the start of a fine school. Graduation exercises, school plays and even basketball games were held in the Quonset-type building which for years was the Zellner Feed and Seed store. The Fellowship Hall at the Methodist Church was also used for school functions.



The First High School For Camp Verde

Built in 1918, it had three classrooms and an office. Growth was slow in Camp Verde and it was not until a 1948 bond election that the high school was enlarged with the addition of three more classrooms and a gymnasium.

A 1948 bond election enabled the expansion of the high school with the addition of three more classrooms and a gymnasium. It is known, however, that the District ran out of funds for the gymnasium and Charles Ward of the Roca Roja Ranch donated the money to complete the building, which was a source of pride for the community. In 1958 to 1960, four classrooms were added on the south part of the small campus which served both schools. Later, several moveable buildings were purchased to ease the strain on both the elementary and high schools as the population of Camp Verde continued to grow.

Superintendent Leroy Parker said the “green building” was used for elementary classrooms until it was dismantled to make room for the new gym in 1949.

Old Elementary School (now partially the Sterrett Wrestling Complex and Maintenance Department) In December of 1972 an open house was held at Camp Verde’s new Elementary School. The new school was situated on about ten acres of land which was obtained from the Forest Service at \$825 per acre. The District had a hard time keeping up with the growing student body and nearly lost the battle. When the bond issue to build this new elementary school came before the voters, they voted it in eight to one. That bond issue also provided for remodeling the old school plant into a high school only, and for the first time in its history, the District’s high school and elementary were sent on their separate ways. Just east of the site was another 22 ½ acres which was also acquired at the same price from the Forest Service as the future site for what is now the High School and Track and Football Field. The new elementary school buildings were all steel. The Superintendent at the time was Sam Hammerstrom and the Elementary School Principal was Frank Tompkins.

Annexation

In 1944, the Clear Creek District No. 3, was annexed to District No. 28.

Superintendent Leroy Parker said that in 1948-49, District No. 28 annexed the Irving and Childs schools. These schools were “accommodation schools” operated by the county directly, for the benefit of children whose parents worked at the power plants there.

This annexation increased the assessed valuation of District No. 28, from less than \$300,000 to over a million dollars. It enabled the District to float a bond issue that provided three more classrooms, a gym and an office and library for the little high school. The District purchased a "carry-all" in the summer of 1948 to transport athletic teams.

First Superintendent

When Leroy Parker took over as Superintendent of the Camp Verde School in January 1948, the school owned two buses, one a 36-passenger bus, and the other a 42-passenger. One ran north of town and the other south.

During those early years when Leroy Parker was Superintendent, District No.28 received \$24,000 from the federal government, Johnson/O'Malley funds under Public Law 815. Camp Verde was the first District in Arizona to receive this type of funding. With the money the District built an addition east of the original rock building – four new classrooms – and a bus barn. Two of the classrooms doubled as a cafeteria.

Leroy was perhaps the person to head the District for the longest time, serving alternately as Principal of the high school and Superintendent for 17 years.

When Leroy left in 1965, Don May took over the District until 1969 when he became Superintendent at Bagdad and Sam Hammerstrom then took his place.

The first basketball team.

One of the first girls' basketball team was in 1911. The players were Dolly VanDeren, Effie Goswick, McDonald, Murdock, and Rena Fredricks. The coach was Earl Reid.



*The team
in 1911*

© This is the 1911 Camp Verde Girls' Basketball Team.
From left: Dolly VanDeren; not known; Effie Goswick; McDonald; Murdock; and Rena Fredricks.
Coach Earl Reid, seated, later grew up to establish the Gray Mountain Trading Post, just off the Navajo Reservation.

Camp Verde's first boy's basketball team was formed in 1917-18. The first players were Dave Hopkins, Harness Taylor, James Roarke, Alvin Tompkins and Jim Gardner.



Resources

Camp Verde Historical Society

Articles from:

*THE JOURNAL Graduation Special Edition – Camp Verde, Arizona – History of Camp Verde
Schools – May 1987*

THE JOURNAL Special History Edition – Camp Verde, Arizona – April 1989

Those were the days by Margaret Goddard, C.V. Historical Society

Those were the days – The Independent, Cottonwood, Arizona – C.V. Historical Society

A school at Fort Verde? By Phyllis Hazekamp

Camp Verde View April 25, 1973, September 1, 1978

Fort Verde State Park

The VERDE INDEPENDENT – Cottonwood, Arizona – December 1960

Other various newspaper articles as compiled by the Camp Verde Historical Society