

HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

The Los Osos Schoolhouse



By Joan Sullivan

As the school year begins, I am reminded of the one room Los Osos Schoolhouse and how it came to rest in the South Bay Community Park, where it is now assured of good care by the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Department.

The Los Osos School District was established January 8, 1872. Built on Turri Road on the south side of Los Osos Valley Road, the schoolhouse measured 20 feet by 44 feet. Later, after the removal of the hothouse, a restroom was added to the rear of the original building. State appropriated funds for 1882 were \$178, with an additional \$19 for library expenses.



The Los Osos School as seen in 1959, shortly after it closed.

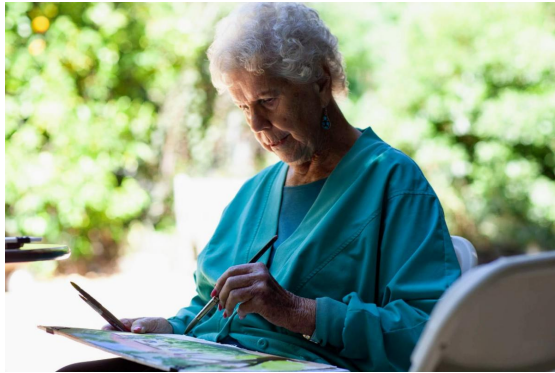
According to a report by Miss Meda Cole, a teacher at the school between 1883 and 1884, seventeen students (nine boys and eight girls) were enrolled in the Los Osos School. She reported that the pupils were bright, cheerful, and easy to govern. Miss Cole stated that the wooden building was sturdy, nicely furnished, and the only thing she found lacking to make it the most desirable school in the country was a fence and trees. "A school of this kind makes a teacher feel well paid for all the labor and energy expended" she added.

The San Luis Obispo County School Manual of 1914 explained the philosophy to be applied in one room schoolhouse education. It stated "See to it, Teacher, that every pupil receives a very thorough drill in the fundamentals. If the pupil leaves the Eighth year with ability -- 1. To grasp thought quickly and accurately; 2. To express himself clearly and forcibly - and with some modest degree of elegance; and 3. To apply his mathematics

readily and correctly to the more common problems of daily life and business, the pupil has an excellent foundation for future growth and usefulness.”

The largest enrollment in the school was in the 1920s, when a male teacher had 30 pupils. Jean Warren taught at the one room schoolhouse from 1949 to 1954. The school’s last teacher was Marion Wheeler, who taught from 1954 to 1958.

Granny (Elizabeth) Orr, of Baywood Park, was among the many residents concerned about the fate of the little schoolhouse. She started a petition to save the building. District Supervisor at the time, Elston Kidwell, felt the school was vulnerable to destruction by vandals. He arranged to have the structure moved to the South Bay Community Park on Los Osos Valley Road.



Joan Sullivan, painting in the Dallidet Gardens.

When the schoolhouse was moved in September of 1973, many items of interest were found in its walls and foundation including: hickory switches, slates, love notes, and early readers. To prepare for the move, parts of the sides were taken off so workmen could destroy two colonies of honey bees found in the walls. The roof and rafters were also dismantled so the building could clear utility wires. The sides and ends of the old schoolhouse were removed and stored while the building was reconstructed on the new five acre park donated by John Curci.

Joan Sullivan wrote and provided the sketch for this article which originally appeared in the October 1987 edition of the Bear Facts newspaper of Los Osos. Thursday was Joan's 95th birthday, and we at the History Center celebrate her innumerable contributions to history and the arts, and wish her all the happiness in the world. If you would like to join us in wishing Joan a happy birthday, please feel free to respond to this email and we will gladly pass your messages along.

Upcoming Events

November



Harvest Fall Soup in a Sack

We've been growing vegetables at the Dallidet Gardens, and while we can't have a big party in the garden like we've done in years past, we're not going to let a little thing like Covid-19 prevent us from putting this

December



Holiday Drive Thru BBQ

Fill your mind with the diverse history of the Brooks Street/Eto Park neighborhood, and fill your belly with delicious tri tip with all the fixings!

You do the holiday shopping, we'll

food to good use.

So we're serving take-out! A picnic sack for two.

Join us on Sunday, November 15th for our Covid-safe drive-thru picnic in a sack.

[Click here for more information or to buy tickets](#)

make Sunday supper.

A feast for four - or lots of leftovers.

Join us on Sunday, December 6th for our Covid-safe drive-thru barbeque.

[Click here for more information or to buy tickets](#)

November 18 through December 11



In ordinary times, we would be inviting you to attend our annual fundraising gala.

Unfortunately, we are not in ordinary times. In fact, now more than ever, folks are aware of the fact that we are living through history - which makes it all the more important that we have an institution like the History Center to preserve the history of San Luis Obispo County for future generations.

With items and experiences from the finest local people and businesses, you're sure to find something that catches your eye. Whether you check off your holiday shopping or decide to treat yourself, you'll be helping the History Center.

[See what we have on offer by clicking here!](#) We'll be adding more items all the time.

Thomas Kessler
Executive Director

