

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Pacific Grove Schools

Pacific Grove, realizing that better schools make better communities, has endeavored to equip her schools to tank among the best architecturally and academically, writes Dr. Lucy McLane in her book "A Piney Paradise."

The first school in the Grove was conducted by Ms. Carrie Lloyd. Her sister, the late Mrs. Mable Dinkelspiel once told Dr. McLane: "On June 19, 1884, Carrie opened a summer school in the room prepared in the rear of Chautauqua Hall, a room often used for church services and group meetings."

According to Dr. McLane the records show that the school was sponsored by the Methodist Church for the four or five children of the Camp Ground and that it was in session only six months of the year.

Pacific Grove's first public school graduates were Cecil Gretter Clarence Anthony and James Harper, in June of 1891. "Piney Paradise" has many more interesting items concerning the public school system from those early days until the present, but there are also many entertaining chapters concerning the churches of the city, the Hopkins Marine Station, the progress of transportation and utilities and the Museum and the Library, to mention a few.

Of course Dr. McLane, the author, devotes well merited space to the history of the Chautauque, for the Grove was once advertised as "Chautauque-by-the-Sea." The Methodist Retreat Association entertainment began when transloads of people from San Jose, Sacramento, San Francisco, and other places came in July to attend the Chautauque Literary and Scientific Circle. It had the distinction of being the first of the Chautauquas in the West, having made its initial appearance in Pacific Grove on June 30, 1879.

One of the nice little stories which Dr. McLane tells in her book concerns the dairy in Pacific Grove in the early '90's. It was owned by Milton Little who came to California in 1843 with the Joseph Walker party and worked first as a clerk in Monterey. Then he became a partner with Thomas Oliver Larkin. Later he invested in land and in 1897 sold his dairy to Warner Dodge. This was the only dairy in the Retreat and sold milk to the entire community.

He had especially built milk wagons with the floor partitioned into cubby-holes to support the cans as the milk traveled over chuck-holes, unpaved and rough roads. Warner was joined in the business by his brother "Bert". They did their milking around two o'clock in the afternoon; then they poured the milk into five-gallon cans and set them in the horse trough to cool until four o'clock. At that hour they usually started out in their "piano-seated wagon" – one small seat for the driver – on their route.

Various receptacles, pitchers, bowls, tin pans, and the like, containing coins or tickets for milk, awaited them on retreat porches, to be filled.

Dr. McLane quotes "The Pacific Grove Review" of 1888, when she tells the story of the sale of the most popular livery stable there:

"The largest private transaction that has occurred in the history of our city was consummated this week, in the sale of the Pacific Grove Livery Stables to Mr. H.E. Kent of Hollister. The sale incudes, in addition to the elegant stable building with busses, carriages and live stock, the rink building and about fifteen lots; ... It is supposed to be in the neighborhood of \$50,000. Of Mr. J.O. Johnson, the builder and retiring owner of this fine establishment, no word is needed from us as his name is written upon every page of Pacific Grove's history. The new proprietor is already counted as one of the solid men of the town."

The Review also observed: "The largest train bus of H.E. Kent's stable shines resplendent with a new dress of carmine, the running gear being done in cream stripes with a golden brown. Shields done in our national colors intermingled tastefully with graceful scroll work done in gold and brown. Canfield the painter did the work."