

# The One-Room Schoolhouse

Education of their children was of primary importance to the first settlers of East Contra Costa. Often the teacher was a neighbor and initial classes were held in a pioneer home. As more settlers arrived, families banded together to build a school house and hire a teacher. A board of trustees was selected and together with the community, they provided maintenance, water and wood for the stove.

Schools were typically built no further than 4 miles apart to allow students to walk no more than 2 miles. Students furnished their own supplies including books and writing slates. Until the school could afford to buy books, they were also asked to bring whatever books were at home, which usually meant a bible, an almanac, or old textbooks.

Early schools were simple, consisting of one or two rooms heated with a pot-bellied stove, little playground equipment and an outdoor 'privy'. Water came from a well or cistern and there was usually a bucket and dipper near the door for drinking and washing.

The school contained grades one through eight with anywhere from five to fifty youngsters, usually all taught by one teacher. School was compulsory for children ages 8 to 14 (enacted in California in 1874). The schoolhouse also served other community functions such as meetings, social and seasonal activities.

Teacher salaries were low, about \$15-\$30 per month. Teachers often began teaching at age 16 upon completion of 2 years of high school, but a fully credentialed teacher was a graduate of the California State Normal School, founded in 1862, and later became San Jose State University. Teachers were expected to be virtuous and have extremely high morals. They typically lived with the family of one of the students and were expected to keep the schoolhouse clean, draw each day's water supply and keep the wood stove fire dup on cold days.

The school term was constructed around the needs of the community. The farm family needed all available hands for spring planting and fall harvest, therefore most rural children did not attend school during these times.



# **Liberty School**

**1865-1944**

Located on Marsh Creek Road about a mile east of Deer Valley Road on a narrow piece of land between the road and the creek, this school served early families of the area for 79 years.

Liberty School merged with the Brentwood School District in 1944, forming the Brentwood Union School District.



# Deer Valley School

**1869 – 1924**

The original building of the Deer Valley School was built in Judsonville (Judsonville School). The building was moved to the southwest corner of Balfour and Deer Valley Roads on the Van Buren Ranch because of the dangers of the coal mines in Judsonville.

There were four Deer Valley schoolhouse sites, the last being located near corner of Chadbourne and Deer Valley Roads.

In 1918, Deer Valley School District joined with the Brentwood Elementary School and students transferred to the Brentwood-Deer Valley School when it was built in 1924.



# Lone Tree School

**1869-1883    1883-1908**

*(1<sup>st</sup> building – no picture)*

Three buildings have housed the Lone Tree School, named for the landmark of a lone tree in the middle of the road about a half mile east of the school.

The land on Lone Tree Way across from Heidorn Ranch Road was originally granted by the Western Pacific Railroad, who conveyed it to Charles McLaughlin, who in turn deeded one acre for the school.

The first building burned in 1879 and the second built to replace it in 1883. By 1908, this building began to lean and was considered dangerous.



## Lone Tree School 1908-1959

The new Lone Tree School was erected next to the old, which was then torn down. It originally provided classes through the tenth grade, but that span was reduced to first through eighth grades in 1913.

When it closed in 1959, the Lone Tree School was the last of the one room, one teacher schools in Contra Costa County.

The Lone Tree District was annexed into the Brentwood-Deer Valley School District on July 29, 1940. Students were allowed to attend Lone Tree or Brentwood-Deer Valley School. When the district dissolved in 1959, the boundaries were drawn to divide students between Brentwood Union School District (*eastern 2/3 of students*) and the Antioch Unified School District (*western 1/3 of students*).



# **Brentwood Grammar School**

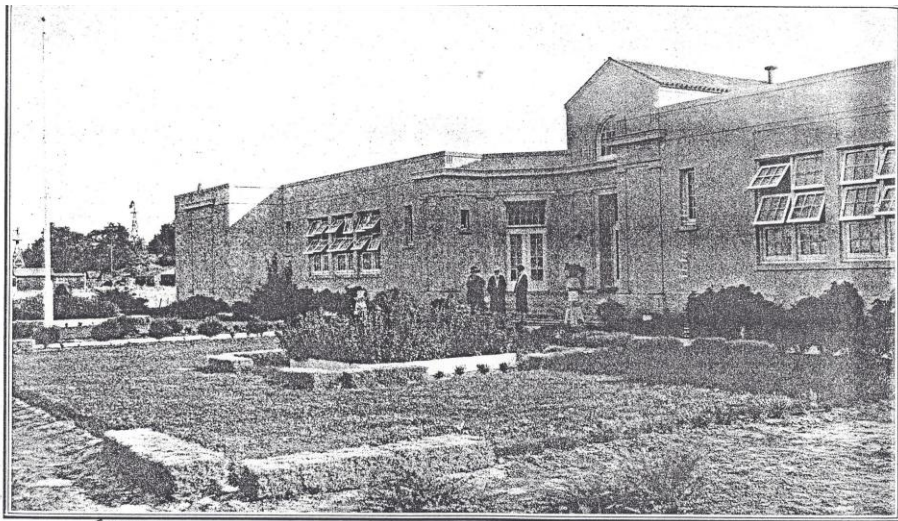
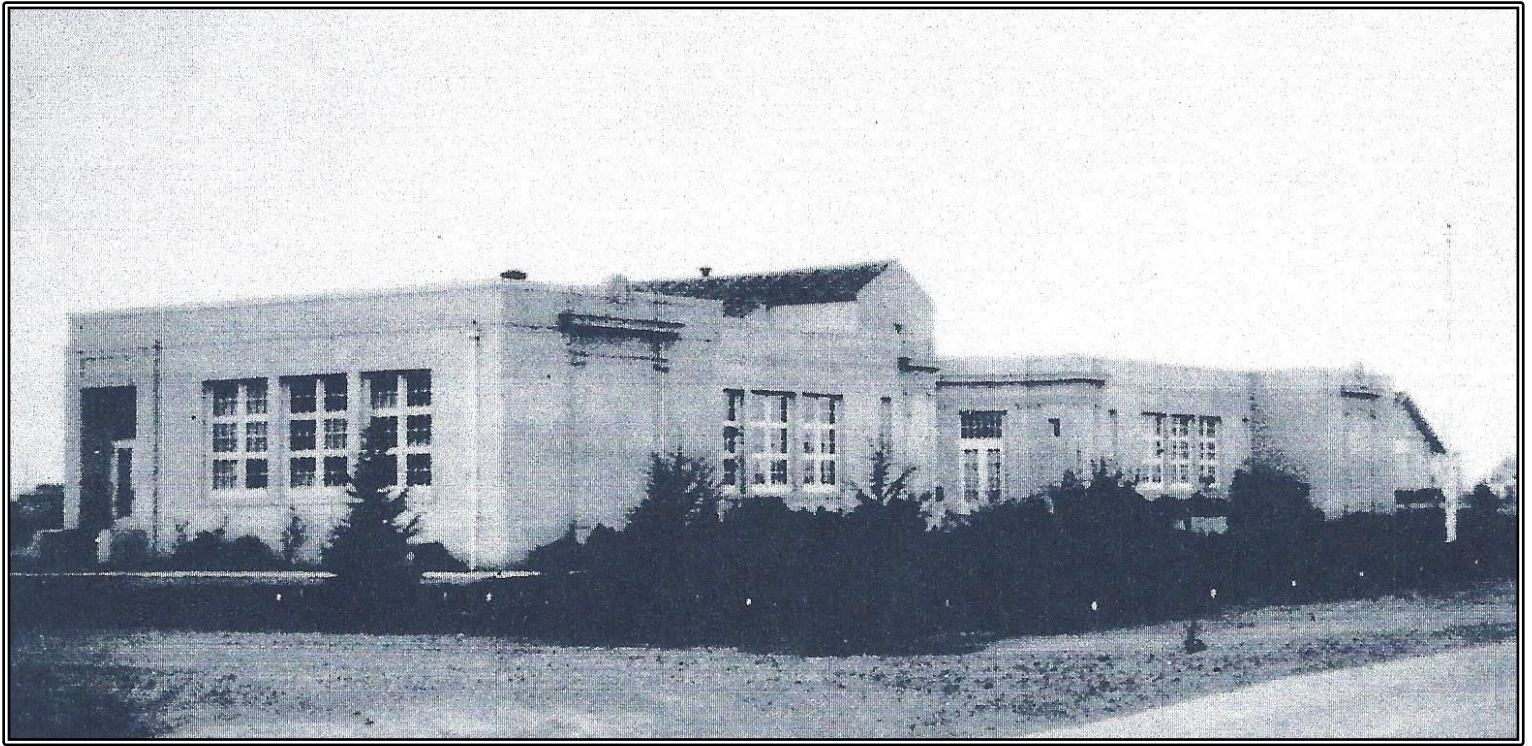
## **1887-1924**

The Brentwood Grammar School District was organized in 1878, and a one-room schoolhouse and woodshed were built on the east side of Highway 4 (*Brentwood Boulevard*) across from the Methodist Church and at the end of Maple Street.

In 1887, two classrooms were added to the original building and transformed the school into a three room building surrounded on all sides by a porch, with a belfry tower.

When Liberty Union High School District was established in 1902-1903, the first sessions of high school classes were held in the rear room of this Brentwood Grammar School.

Students attended school here until Brentwood-Deer Valley School opened in 1924 located west of Highway 4 between Pine and Spruce Streets. This move to the new building also allowed Liberty High School to expand their facilities.

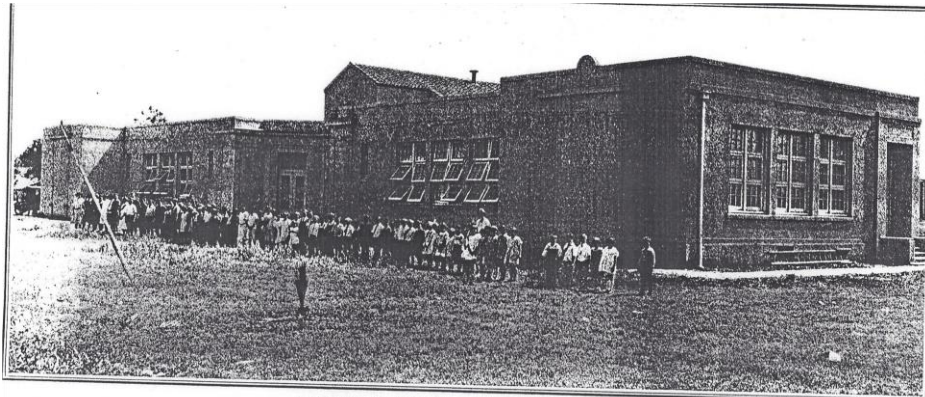


(1924)

**BRENTWOOD'S SPLENDID NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

*One of the Finest Structures of Its Kind in the Interior. One Hundred and Forty Pupils Are in Attendance. A Credit in Every Way to the Wonderful Diablo Valley. Mrs. Lucile Shirley is Principal, Assisted by the Following Instructors: Miss Kate Murphy, Miss Lillian Smith, Miss Fern Bradford, and Miss Freda Howard*

*—From a Photograph by the Logan Studio of Stockton, Taken Expressly for the Tenth Development Edition of the BYRON TIMES*



**HANDSOME NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL AT BRENTWOOD**

*In the Heart of the Irrigated District. Some Eighty Promising Boys and Girls With Their Teachers Are Shown Here From a photograph by the Logan Studio of Stockton, taken expressly for the Ninth Development Edition of the Byron Times*

*1924 Byron Times Booster Edition*

# Brentwood-Deer Valley School

## 1924-1997

With increasing student enrollment, a \$40,000 bond was passed in 1921 to build a new elementary school to serve students in grades 1-8. Land was purchased west of Highway 4 between Pine and Spruce Streets for the building.

The building had a front alcove with doors opening to an office on the left and an auditorium straight across from the entrance. Another office space for district purposes was located upstairs over the auditorium. Two classrooms were to the left and two classrooms to the right.

In 1931 continued increase in enrollment necessitated addition of 5 classrooms constituting a south wing. 3 rooms paralleled Pine Street and 2 rooms parallel to these 3 connected with a hallway. There were now 9 classrooms.

By 1939, the school was again at capacity and classrooms were added to the north wing parallel to the existing classrooms and connected by a hallway. A brick annex of 2 classrooms were added behind the main building, detached but connected by a covered walkway.

'Temporary' pre-fab portables consisting of 4 classrooms were added in 1946 and at that time housed the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. They were placed parallel to Spruce Street. These 'temporary' buildings remain today.

A Kindergarten building of 2 classrooms was added to the northwest corner of the campus in 1961. And with continued growth of enrollment, portables were added to the grounds to accommodate students.

By 1997, the town of Brentwood was fast growing and student population base around the existing school declined as housing developments were built further from the downtown area. A new Brentwood Elementary School was built closer to student population on Griffith Lane and the student body was transferred. The original building was sold to Liberty Union High School District.