

Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation

December Newsletter, 2020

Before we get into this issue of the newsletter, the Board, Committee Members, and those who volunteer for the SCCBF would like to offer our sincere, heartfelt, THANK YOU for your very generous donations. If not for your contributions, no matter how small or large, our work would not be able to continue.



Today it's a little hard to imagine, but our historic 2-story white brick grammar school on the hillside above Sutter Creek was not always as it appears today.

When first completed sometime in 1870-1871, the imposing masonry edifice remained unpainted brick and mortar for a short while.



It appears, from early photographs and evidence uncovered at the school, that at one time the original building was painted a deep shade of red.

Mankind's desire to paint things red goes back many thousands of years, certainly pre-dating the availability of ready-made paints. Without detailing the entire history of red paint, let us just say red was the easiest color to make. Early wooden structures like barns were painted with a mix of cow's blood, or berry juice mixed with oil or turpentine. You can just imagine how much blackberry juice it would take to paint a building the size of Sutter Creek's historic grammar school. Fortunately, by the time the school was built "red wash" paint was readily available at nominal cost - maybe even donated.

Also, by the 1870's, the phrase "little red schoolhouse" had become a generic term for any small, usually 1 or 2 room country schoolhouse regardless of actual color. The painting of our school must have been a fairly monumental undertaking given the lack of spray rigs or motorized lifting devices. That large building was painted with brush and bucket.

Just how long the school remained dark red is not known and none of the photographs of the building itself are dated.

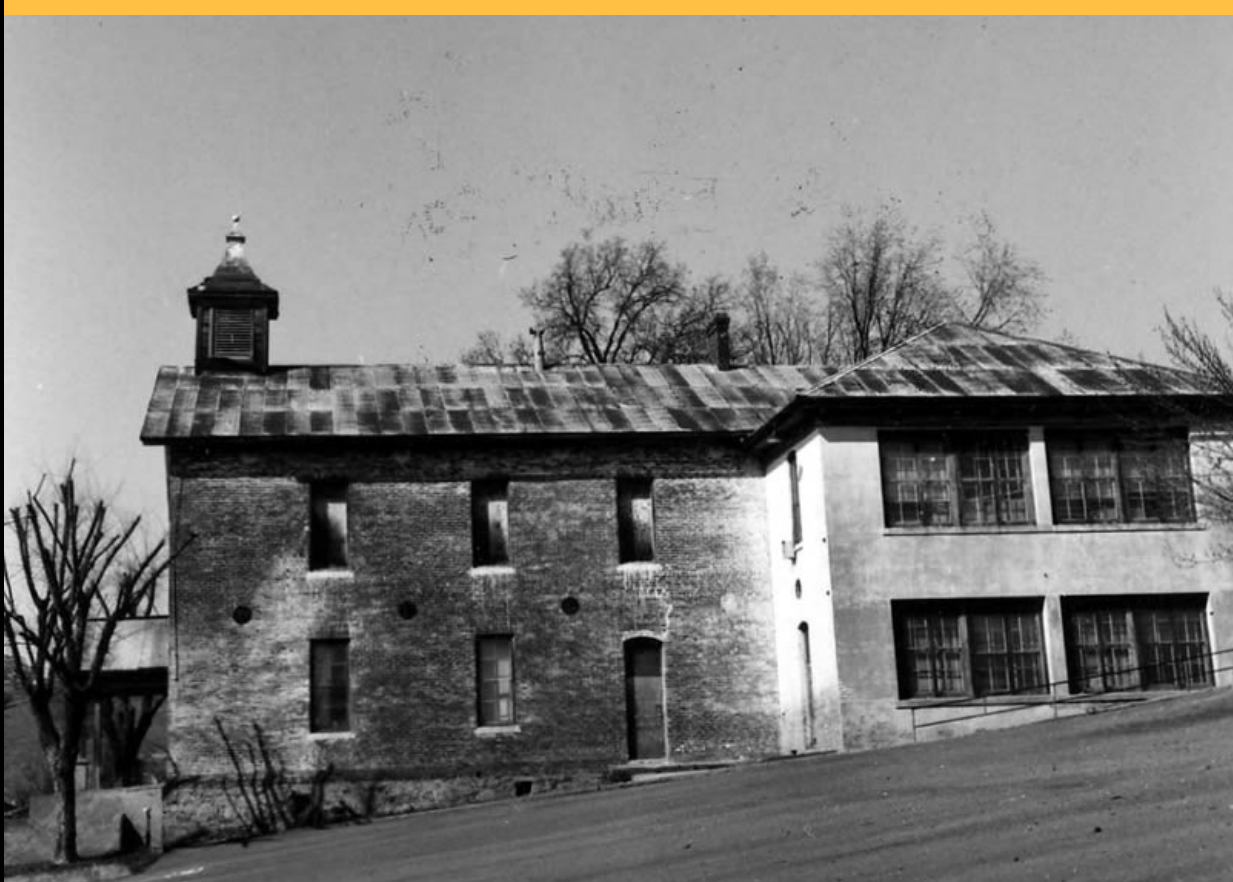


The photo above shows the newly constructed addition built around 1896, before it was painted. The old section is still dark (red). Note the outhouse behind the school. Also at this time, the front porch roof has been added. The windows in the addition are the narrow size used in the original section.

Sometime in the 1920's, another renovation saw the addition of the now present indoor restrooms housed in the wooden extension at the rear of the building. The windows in the addition were punched out to double in size. Also, the newly built structure was stuccoed (probably to cover the patchwork of the re-sized windows), and the whole shebang was painted white.



The building was repainted this same white in the 1980's to coincide with the restoration by the Sutter Creek Woman's Club. See before and after pictures below.





The current restoration now underway by the SCCBF will eventually include another clean white paint job. This final touch will return our historic grammar school to its former status as the shining star on the hill overlooking our beautiful city.

As the historic grammar school passes its 150th new year, we of the SCCBF would like to wish everyone of you a very happy and healthy New Year.



2021

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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