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PHOTOGRAPHY

School Days, School Days... September — the end of summer, the beginning of fall, and the start of a new school year



history

By Shirley Pepys

September. Summer is over, it's the beginning of autumn, and children go back to school. What do you remember about your early school days? If you grew up in a Newport Beach community back in the day, you would have attended the only grammar school in the area, Newport Elementary School, formerly known as Newport Grammar School, which opened in 1894. Built with supplies donated by the McFadden family, this one-room school was situated at the end of the Newport Pier and had 18

School days, school days, dear old golden rule days
Readin' and 'ritin and 'rithmetic,
Taught to the tune of the hick'ry stick,
You were my queen in calico,
I was your bashful, barefoot beau,
And you wrote on my slate, I love you Joe,
When we were a couple of kids.
"School Days," "When We Were A Couple of Kids" by Cobb & Edwards (1907)



"School Days" original sheet music cover



students. From the beginning, the beach served as a playground and the ocean as a backdrop to this learning institution.

By 1905, an increase of children in the area demanded a larger school, so a building was constructed a block away for over 40 students. In 1912, some 500 residents purchased the location where the school sits today. That third school had four classrooms, a principal's office, a library, an auditorium, and two basement rooms. The school was enlarged again, ultimately occupying an entire block. However, the 1933 Long Beach earthquake compromised the structure, resulting in demolition and reconstruction. The new structure was completed in September 1935, and this is the same building that stands today, although more expansion has occurred since then.

Nibs White (1914–1999), a long-time resident of Balboa Island, recounts in his 1994 book, *Once Upon an Island: Tales of Early Days on Balboa Island from 1914 to 1941*, how he rode to school in a boat. "In 1922/23 I lived down here during the winter and went to the Newport Grammar School on the oceanfront in McNally's dory. I rode up the bay each morning with Bernard and Jean McNally where Jim McNally (Bernard & Jean's father) ran the bow of the dory up on the sand opposite the school so we could jump off and walk across the open sand to school. We walked down after school and came home on the ferry. It was great fun going to school in a boat, and I shall never forget it."

Seymour Beek shared this memory: "I attended Newport Beach Grammar School (now Newport Elementary) through the eighth grade. I lived with my parents in the same house I now occupy at 528

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