

THE BEGINNING



President Kennedy had recently been assassinated and the Beatles were still a month away from “invading” the United States, but on January 6, 1964, approximately 350 eager ninth and tenth graders migrated to Wall Street to open up the second high school in Livermore. Even though Granada High School officially opened on this date, the genesis of the school actually goes back to May 5, 1960.

In 1950 Livermore’s population was 4,364, but by 1960 had risen to 16,068. This sudden increase was surely due to the research laboratory that had opened in Livermore in the early 1950s. A second high school was needed because of this rapid population increase in the town. Livermore High’s capacity was 1,750 students, and it was projected that over 2,100 high school students would be in town by 1964.

The site selected for the second high school was in an area west of town just south of the Oak Knoll cemetery landmark and Granada Village. This land was owned by Sunset Development Corporation, and Sunset Development agreed to give this land to the school district in lieu of paying school fees for its housing development.¹



On May 5, 1960 a special election was held to determine two things: (1) a ballot measure to incur a 4 million dollar loan from the

View from Boot Hill Prior to Construction

State to finance the construction of a second high school and (2) to select the name for the second high school. All voting was to be done in the gym at Livermore High School, where three different precincts were set up.

The choices on the ballot for the name of the second high school were: Granada, Oak Knoll, and Mocho. The following are the results of that election:

1. Granada-- 383
2. Oak Knoll --299
3. Mocho—215
4. Write-ins:
 - a. Boot Hill—34
 - b. Herrick—12
 - c. Vallecitas—7
 - d. Las Positas—7

¹ Chris Troubridge, Sunset Development Corporation, February 28, 2014

- e. Del Valle—2
- f. Juan Christie—2

The Herald and News reported: “Tuesday’s elections—voters picked Granada High School as the name of a new school to be built with the loan—but the name is still not certain and Granada may not be officially selected by the Trustees.”² As this report suggests the voters also approved the 4 million dollar loan by the two-thirds vote required by law. At their next meeting on May 24, 1960, the Trustees did approve Granada High School as the name for the second high school in Livermore.³

Interestingly, another bond issue election was held on November 6, 1962 so the district could qualify for a state loan to finance the final three stages of Granada High School. To show how important this bond measure was to Livermore High students, the following article ran in their school paper:

Have you stopped to think about how important Granada High really is?

You’ve probably noticed how crowded our school is this year. There are just too many students and not enough room for them. You may have been one of the lucky ones who didn’t have their schedule changed. On the other hand you may have been one of the unlucky ones. You may have had your schedule changed many times. If you did, you know how annoying this is. This is all because of the shortage of classrooms. Next year a new group of students will arrive at L.H.S. If there isn’t any room now what will it be like then? The only way we can solve this problem is to vote “yes” on Proposition B. This is the bond for Granada High. So please, help yourself and others. Urge your parents to vote “yes” on Proposition B.⁴

This bond measure passed 5716 to 1759, a nearly 75% approval.⁵ Later that month the School Board approved the boundary lines between Granada and Livermore High Schools. All ninth and tenth graders living east of L Street and south of Pine Street were assigned to Granada.



View of Boot Hill from the Front of the School, circa 1963

² *The Herald and News*, May 13, 1960 p. 1

³ *The Herald and News*, May 27, 1960 p. 1

⁴ *El Vaquerito*, October 26, 1962, p.1

⁵ *The Herald and News*, November 7, 1962

Jack Lee, who had been named principal of Granada on April 2, 1962, addressed the School Board in November of that year and outlined his vision for the new students entering Granada. He told the Board that approximately 350 students, in grades nine and ten, would enter Granada the following fall semester (this was the initial due date for the opening). All classes would be offered with the exception of Agriculture. He reported that he anticipated the need for 16 teachers, four who would transfer from Livermore High and twelve who would be hired from the outside. He further stated that the following was his three-year plan for sports:

- Frosh/JV Basketball—First Year
- Varsity Basketball—Second Year
- Varsity Football—Third Year⁶

The official groundbreaking for Granada High School occurred on January 10, 1963.



Principal Jack Lee Addressing the Crowd at Granada's Official Groundbreaking

Attending this groundbreaking were city officials, Superintendent Ralph Wattenburger (second from right) and members of the General Contractors, Wallace Webb and Son, Hayward, who won the contract bid.

The construction of the school was divided into four phases:

PHASE I

- 18 classrooms
- 2 shops
- 1 Multi-purpose room
- One-third of the overall administration building

PHASE II

- 2 more classrooms
- One-half of the gym/locker room
- Science building

PHASE III

- Another classroom
- Remainder of the gym
- 2nd shop wing

⁶ *The Herald and News*, November 21, 1962

PHASE IV

- Remainder of the administration building
- Music rooms
- Second locker room



Principal Jack Lee watches as Jacquie Williams (School Treasurer) Joe Barbera (First Student Body President) turn the ground for Granada High School

The total cost of the new school was budgeted for four million dollars, and it was built to house 1500 students. Comparatively, a new high school today costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

THE MASCOT

The students did not wait until they moved to the Granada site to start planning their new school. The first meeting to select the school colors and mascot occurred on March 8, 1963. Approximately 375 students, the ninth graders who were attending Livermore High School at the time, plus the eighth graders who were scheduled to attend Granada in the fall all met in the auditorium at Livermore High School.⁷ They soon determined that the school colors were to be black and gold, but the determination of the mascot took more time. The Matadors finally won out over the second choice Toros and third choice Trojans. Rounding out the other choices were Rebels (7 votes), Thunderbirds (3 votes) and Wildcats (1 vote).⁸ The other business conducted at that meeting were the creation of a Constitution Committee and a Rally Committee. Selected to serve on the Constitution Committee were Chuck England, Marge Holdener, Joan Roth, Jackie

⁷ *The Herald and News*, March 8, 1963, p. 6

⁸ Meeting notes of Jacquie Williams-Courtright

Williams, Joe Barbera, and Tib Warner. The Rally Committee consisted of Jan Deligans, Marcie Andre, Judy Poco, Deidre Foote and Thekla Cooley.⁹

HAIL GRANADA

Granada High School was scheduled to open at the start of the fall term, 1963. Delays in construction pushed this opening back until the end of the fall term. In the meantime, even though they were still attending classes on Livermore High School's campus, this delay did not stop the students from planning the future of their school. Earlier, Owen Goldsmith, the choral director at LHS, wrote the words and music to "Hail Granada." In fact, this song was first sung at the groundbreaking ceremony in January 1963.

Granada, Granada, we stand and sing to thee,
We carry thy banner to ev'ry victory
The years here together shall last a life-time thru,
To all rules of honor, we will e'er be true.
Too soon will we depart these halls and travel far and wide
But as we make our way thru life, thy name we'll say with pride.
Granada, Granada, thy honor never fail
To thee, our alma mater hear us, Hail, Hail

GRANADA OPENS

Jeannie Quan, the current mayor of Oakland, was a 10th grader at the time and wrote an article in *The Independent* that outlined the final days of the Granada students at Livermore High School:

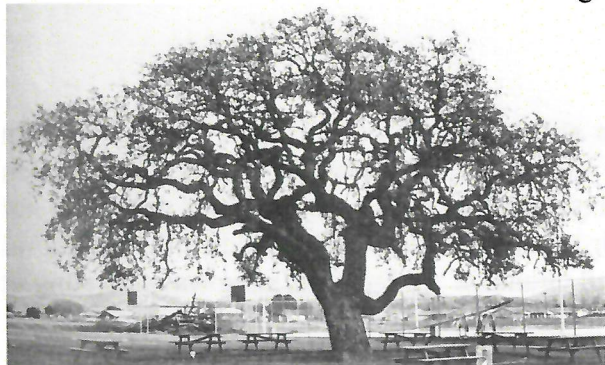
From the beginning of the school year until now, every Matador followed the progress of building on the Granada campus and hoped that the move could be made soon. The first hint of a "big move" during Christmas vacation came as a "teaser" assembly early in December. At this assembly, Mr. Lee, the principal of Granada High School, announced the possibility of the move, and the student body roared its approval. For the next week, Granadans smiled optimistically and began making plans for moving. Then it happened—a special notice issued on Friday, December 13 notified that "all areas were GO!" And the Matadors did just that.

On the last Friday and all that week, the Matadors returned Livermore High books and equipment and said good-bye to their friends and enemies at Livermore High. G-day came to an end with a joint Christmas assembly of both schools, where they joined together to celebrate the Christmas season and "their present" of Granada's move. Then, at the close of the assembly, the Matadors cleaned out their lockers and left the L.H.S. campus for the last time as a student body.¹⁰

⁹ *The Herald and News*, March 8, 1963 p. 6

¹⁰ *The Independent*, January 4, 1964

So on January 6, 1964 approximately 350 eager ninth and tenth graders entered Granada High School to discover a theme that would be ongoing for the next three years—construction. During



construction the large oak tree on campus was slotted to be cut down, but it was saved and turned into the senior tree. In the midst of all the noise Jacquie Williams related that, “We had no heat, no clocks, no lockers, no water, and no bells. Principal Jack Lee would stand in the hallways with a bell to indicate passing times.”¹¹ In fact, the bell that Lee used had a history behind it. The bell once belonged to Stanley Thompson Sr., an educator who

previously used it for about 30 years in such towns as Esparto, Tehama, Corning, and Las Molinas. *The Herald and News* reported that Thompson’s granddaughter, Cindy Thompson, was a Granada student and she passed on the bell to Principal Lee. Lee responded, “I feel like Santa Claus ringing this bell.”¹²

Thekla Cooley, reporting in the *Granada Eye*, reflected on that first day:

Everyone had great visions of what the school will be with time. A hopeful Principal Jack Lee said, “Within two weeks we may have lockers, a vending area and a few other things.” Now the students must carry all their books from class to class and eat a rather dry lunch at noon.

School was dismissed early due to the fact that there was no heating and plumbing and many students had not brought their lunches.

As students left, I heard almost all of them comment, “It may not be the best thing in the world, but it’s better than being overcrowded in over at Livermore.”¹³

As the semester progressed dissatisfaction rose not only with the students, but also with their parents. The cause? Since Granada did not have locker and shower facilities, the physical education students had to be bussed to Livermore High for classes. In addition to the physical education students, 26 advanced band students, as well as students taking agricultural classes, were also bussed.¹⁴ To cut the cost of hiring two drivers for \$2.50 an hour, the district had the Granada Head Custodian and the Head Maintenance man split bus driving duties.¹⁵ On the plus side, gasoline only cost 19 cents a gallon.

Since the plans for a new gym and locker room were not going to go to bid until October 1964, the district asked the recreation district if Granada could use May Nissen park for its physical education programs.¹⁶ Physical Education teachers Pat Francisco and Lois Wheeler were

¹¹ Jacquie Williams Interview, February 18, 2014

¹² *The Herald and News*. January 8, 1964, p. 6

¹³ Thekla Cooley, *The Herald and News*, January 8, 1964

¹⁴ *The Herald and News*, January 20, 1964 p.1

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *The Herald and News*, July 29, 1964, p.9

chosen to bus the students to May Nissen. The football team also practiced at May Nissen until 1967.



This picture was taken from Boot Hill. The shops are in the foreground with the multi-purpose room in the back left, the 100 and 200 wings and a small administration building in front of the school.

The original construction called for the building of 18 classrooms, which became the 100 and 200 wings. There were also two shops to be built and a multi-purpose room.

SCIENCE BUILDING

The science building was originally scheduled to be completed by October 1964, but a strike of the hod carrier and plaster unions lasted four weeks, and it was not completed until December 1964. The tardiness of the science building did, however, have an effect on the instructional methodology of the new school.

In fall 1964 the enrollment exceeded the physical capacity to teach all the students, so the Multi-Purpose room became a teaching station. In fact, it was used by the Social Science Department for team teaching, with three classes being taught simultaneously in the facility. As reported in the *Herald and News*, "The first impression of the multipurpose room is that there is a convention going on. On the left front wall next to the stage are Democrat Party posters with the two major candidates. Then to the right, the Republicans are well represented with just about every bumper sticker, poster or placard in existence plastered on the wall."¹⁷

Later Bill Arrieta, Social Science Area Chairperson explained, "...with the completion of the new classrooms, the team teaching idea will be carried on, but the students will have the opportunity to meet in smaller groups after lectures and discuss what they have heard and to get individual instruction."¹⁸

CONSTRUCTION

One can expect problems with any new construction, and in July 1964 the Board of Trustees had a major problem on their hands. A real finger-pointing exercise started as to who was responsible for the unevenness of the hallways in the 100-200 wings. The local newspaper called it a "wavy problem." The contractor, architect and building inspector all agreed that the floors were uneven, each one pointing a finger at the other. The *Herald and News* reported the action of the Board as "being convinced that there is no safety hazard and that the cost of a lawsuit might

¹⁷ *The Herald and News*, November 4, 1964 p. 4

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

be more than the cost of repairs, trustees of the Livermore High School District voted 3-2 Wednesday night to accept the first unit at Granada High School with its wavy corridor floors.”¹⁹ They were assured by the architect that the only problem would be with the appearance of the hallways.

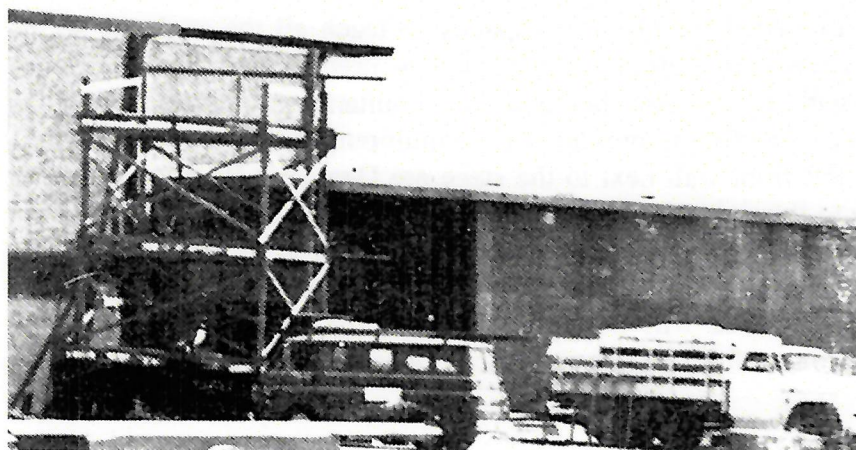
The summer of 1964 was a busy one for Granada. In mid-July the School Board approved a motion to apply to the State to build utility lines to the gymnasium-locker room complex so that the recreation district could tie into the pool. Granada principal Jack Lee emphasized to the Board the need to have a three-meter diving board as part of the new pool. He stated, “A three meter diving board is a must so our divers could compete in Olympic sanctioned events.”²⁰ He also added that Pleasanton had already added one, thereby allowing their students to be involved in Olympic sanctioned events.



The pool did open on June 11, 1965 as part of a joint venture with the School District and the Recreation Department, and it did have a three-meter diving board. The initial fees to use the pool were twenty-five cents for students, fifteen cents for preschoolers when accompanied by an adult, and fifty cents for adults.

²¹

At the July 10th Board meeting, the Trustees also approved the plans for a new gym on campus. They especially liked the idea of a partition so the gym could be sectioned off for different activities. The construction of the gym did not officially start until February 1965, and it was completed in the early fall of 1965. On May 27, 1965, however, two workers were hurt when the scaffolding they were working on collapsed and sent them falling fifteen feet to the ground. They were taken to Valley Memorial Hospital,



treated, and released.

²²

The Boy's Basketball team did a good job of christening the new gym by winning that EBAL championship that first year.

¹⁹ *The Herald and News*, July 10, 1964 p.1

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *The Herald and News*, June 14, 1965 p. 4

²² *The Herald and News*, May 28, 1965 p.1

Interestingly the locker room was initially built on the boys' side of the gym, but a wooden partition was built to separate this locker room for boys and girls. Many coaches and physical education staff recalled that holes had to continually be filled in that partition. It was not until 1968 that a locker room was built on the girls' side.

By 1968 the music building was added to the multi-purpose room, additional classrooms were added, and the administration and library wings were completed. The enrollment in 1967 was 880 and the new buildings were expected to hold 1500 students. In fact, the growth was anticipated to be so fast that there was talk of opening a third high school by 1970. As early as September 1964, the Board of Trustees did name **Las Positas** as the third high school over other choices such as Monte Vista, Vallecito, and Valparaiso. Livermore High School principal Edwin Rundstrom pointed out to the Board that the name Las Positas, meant "little springs and was the name of the Spanish land grant given to Robert Livermore, first white settler in the valley."²³ This third high school was permanently tabled when the District suffered financial problems in the late 1960s.

Through all of this growth one can see that the first generation of students to Granada High were really pioneers as they endured the growing pains that accompanied a new structure. These students, however, built the character of Granada, and the pride they showed by overcoming these growing pains was transferred to each new generation of students.

²³ *The Herald and News*, September 23, 1964 p. 1