



Halcia Eulalia Bower

Class of 2022

Halcia Bower was born in 1876 in a small Georgia town to a family with many challenges. Her sister and both parents died when she was a young girl and she grew up with her grandmother and step-father's family. She never married and pursued a career as a teacher winning a scholarship to a prominent teacher's college. She taught in the southeastern United States in private academies, elementary schools, high schools and colleges, receiving high praise at each.

In 1913, she trained at the Boston School of Expression. "Expression" was the term for a form of stage monologue performance that was popular before movies. She then offered private lessons and went on the road as a performer.

Her sense of industry and adventure pushed her westward. In 1914, she moved to the young state of Oklahoma, taught classes in Expression and with two colleagues, founded the Blackwell College of Fine Arts.

After relocation to California and earning her AB degree in English from USC and her state teaching certificate, she joined the 10-person faculty at Oroville High School in 1919 as an English teacher and the school's very first librarian. She remained at OHS until 1941, when at age 65 she was forced to retire.

With the budget being tight during the Great Depression, she was responsible for planning the new library and setting up the policies for students using it. During her time at OHS, she managed to double the library holdings. She taught classes in Library Science, training young girls in one of the few careers available to them at the time.

At the request of students, she formed an English Club with the stated objective to teach students that there are amusements in constructive entertainment as well as in merely social affairs. Over 50 students presented works of literature, held public debates and sent contestants to the annual Shakespearean contest in Berkeley.

Miss Bower also advised the Advanced English class and Printing class in the twice-yearly production of the *Orocrat*, a booklet of student stories, poems and artwork. The stories and poems were illustrated with cuts made by the Art class. Many of the books were sold.

She directed student plays, hosted students at her apartment for afternoon teas, hosted picnics in the country and led students on moonlight hikes to the Feather River sand bar. In 1922, she was one of two people who had the School Yearbook, *The Alpha*, dedicated to her for laboring "long and faithfully for better English in our Literary department."

Halcia's love of public performance made her a well-known presence in Oroville and brought credit to OHS. During her 22 years at the school, her name appeared in the *Mercury-Register* more than 300 times. She performed interpretive readings for the women's club, children, the Employed Ladies Club, the Business Girls' Club and local church groups. In time, she became more of an actor, reciting from memory the 3,472 word-long story, *The Happy Prince*, and acting in Shakespeare's plays for the general public and the PTA.

She also gave lectures on historical figures and artists to the Women's Relief Corps and the Delphinium Club. During the 1920's, Miss Bower was very active in the Monday Club, both as an officer and as a frequent presenter on literature and art.

Following her mandatory retirement at age 65, in 1941, she advertised her services for “Coaching English” and other subjects in elementary, high school and graduate students in the *Mercury-Register*. For two years she taught in remote areas of Nevada, returning to Oroville each summer and for the final years of her life.

Halicia passed away in Oroville at age 79, and is survived by many cousins including Nick Cross who lives in Santa Monica, CA.