

Copyright © 2023 Nancy McDaniel

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Chapter Number 1

Schools

“In summing up the past year’s work, I can see great advances all along the line. Chimacum, Port Ludlow and Center have built elegant and commodious school buildings and supplied them with handsome furniture, maps, globes, and charts of various kinds. I think it is safe to say there is no county in the state that has better school buildings as a rule than Jefferson County, Nor is there a county where more money is expended per capita to secure the best schools; nor where the citizens are more anxious for the welfare and advancement of the children.”

R.E. Ryan, Jefferson County Superintendent of Schools, 1891

The Chimacum Schools of today came to exist following a long history of consolidation with little schoolhouses built by citizens of Center, Port Ludlow, Irondale, Shine, Tarboo, Irondale, Hadlock, and Chimacum. Some schools ranged from schools in citizen homes to small wood framed structures. In 1918 there were 38 such little schools throughout Jefferson County.

Chimacum citizen, Carter Daggett described a small building made out of hand-hewn shingles and timbers at the east end of Beaver Valley. Later, a second school was built on the McConaghy Farm on Beaver Valley Road. A small school in Irondale provided a first through fourth grade education for the children of the iron mill. Between 1910 and 1915 the Irondale school



combined with another small school in Hadlock in a two-story wood frame building located near the north end of Masonic Hall Road. It accommodated students in grades one through ten.

The original Center school was a log cabin on what is now the George Huntingford family farm. A new Center school was built on Eaglemount Road on what is now the Department of Natural Resources office.

The “old” Center School, ca 1890s, Photos courtesy Jefferson County Historical Society

The “new” Center School, ca 1925





Photo "Shine School" by Dick Osburn in "Shine School"

The Shine school was built circa 1905 when the Rasler family donated one acre for a schoolhouse. The first building was approximately 600 square feet and served six to eight students each year. In 1912 a larger school structure was built, and the first building was turned into housing for the teacher. The school was in use until 1944 when Shine area students were bused to Chimacum.

Shine School, 1925

*L-R Ottar Watney, Josephine Yarr,
Clara Petersen, Arthur Hicks
Second Row: L-R Lawrence
Buskala, Norman Shattuck, Fred
Hanson, Lincoln Petersen, Harold
Petersen, Valdimar Henningson,
Edward Hicks, "Bus" Winton
Front Row: L-R Mary Hanson,
Solbeig Watney, Esther Buskala,
Julia Shattuck, Marjorie Hubbard,
Borghild Watney, Esther Petersen,
Elizabeth Petersen.*



The first Tarboo School was built in 1894 on property purchased from Charles Johnson. It opened its doors to ten students on its first day. Like many buildings of the era, the first and second schools were consumed by fire.



First Tarboo School, Courtesy Jefferson County Historical Society

The first Port Ludlow school was built in 1914. Children of Port Ludlow mill workers were primarily the first students. Later on, a newer school” was built and was in use until the 1950s. That building has been repurposed several times and is still used today in Port Ludlow.



Port Ludlow School in Background. Puget Sound Mill Company Hall in foreground

Photo courtesy Jefferson County Historical Society



*Photo courtesy Jefferson County
Historical Society*

The Nordland one-room schoolhouse was built in 1893 to serve 13 students on both Marrowstone and Indian Islands. In 1912, this larger school was built near the first site in Nordland. When students completed their first eight years, some attended school in Port Townsend, arriving by boat. For others, that was the conclusion of their formal education. The strawberry festival in 1925, held on the school grounds is pictured here.

Hadlock School Was Located between Irondale and Hadlock



First Row: Herbert Whitney, Lutie Fitzpatrick, Delia Lee, Lola King, Mary King, Delia Short, Coach Short. Second Row: Presley Niemayer, Lloyd Doncaster, Ross Short, Roy Whitney, Elmer Short, Edward Little, George Heinsch, Earl Blake, Robert Heinsch, Lola Cline, Mable Whitney, Nellie Cline. Third Row: Lory Niemayer, Conrad Fitzpatrick, Michael Maloney, Eva Whitney, Dora Lee, Bell Niemayer, Nellie Gaddis, Muriel Blake, Nellie Little. Fourth Row: Ensley Doncaster, Henry Baker, Will Niemayer, Clara Baker, Nora Maloney, Cecelia Maloney, Sady Lee

Hadlock School ca. 1896. Photo from Author's collection. Names courtesy Jefferson County Historical Society

SPELLING BEE AT IRONDALE

Representatives of Three Districts to
Meet in Competition This Evening.

The third of the series of spelling contests, now being held all over the county, to select representatives to meet the victors of the try-outs in Clallam, in an inter-county match, will be held this evening at Irondale. Youngsters from three districts will be the contestants, representing Hadlock, which includes the Irondale school, Chimacum and Nordland.

The pupils of all the schools named have been taking a lively interest in the competition, and it is believed a stirring match will result when the bright little people of the three districts get to "spelling down."

Spelling bees were a common event in county schools. Review of old articles in the *Port Townsend Daily Leader* had many reports of competitions between the various small schools.

The Irondale School did not exist for long, and this is one of the only citations found about the Irondale School in "*The Leader*".

*March 12, 1912, Port Townsend Daily
Leader*



*Chimacum School, ca 1880-1890s, Photo courtesy Jefferson County
Historical Society*

The first school building in Chimacum was opened in the fall of 1864 in a small outbuilding on the William Eldridge homestead. William Bishop, Sr. taught the first classes. Eldridge and Bishop, both from England, had jumped ship and settled in the Chimacum Valley in 1855.

The school day was three hours long and three subjects were taught—reading, writing, and arithmetic. There were no textbooks, no globes, and no school mascot. They learned what Bishop knew and could teach. The first students were recorded as Albert and Walter Robinson, Thomas Bishop, Albert and Clara Strand, John and Charlie Twiggs and Henry and George Eldridge.

Later, a one room school was built across the road from Greenwood Cemetery on property now bearing the address 8992 Beaver Valley Road. Building the school was a community affair and families pitched in on its construction. With 15 to 20 students from elementary through high school enrolled, however, it was soon necessary to add a second room. Once again, the community pitched in to enlarge the building using donated lumber and volunteer labor.



Chimacum School, Author's Collection

Robert E. Ryan, hired in 1875, was the first regular teacher at Chimacum. He would later go on to serve as the County Superintendent of Public Schools. As superintendent he earned \$17.75 per month plus another \$3 for visiting other districts and another \$2 per day for travel expenses. There were five districts in the county—Port Townsend, Discovery Bay, Port Ludlow, Quilcene and Chimacum.

In 1879, directors were appointed to oversee Chimacum District No. 4 and included William Bishop, Edward Strand, and William Montgomery. John Van Trojen was the clerk of the board.

*May 3, 1906, Page 3, Port
Townsend Leader*

Roll of honor for the Chimacum
school for the past month: Esther
Larson, Precious Williams, Annie Van
Trojen, Adriana Van Trojen, Gertrude
Righter, Ruth Eldredge, Florence Van
Trojen, Lena Annmeter, Hattie Ama-
cher, Irene Williams, Elizabeth Gray,
Helen Gray, Lawrence Larson, Roy Van
Trojen, Chester Williams, Lyal Eld-
ridge, Donald Williams.

The May 2, 1906, edition of the *Port Townsend Leader* noted that Chimacum schools had been closed for an entire week due to an outbreak of diphtheria in Hadlock. Diseases were part of everyday life in those days as well, except that vaccines were not available. Medical care was little more than palliative and any communicable disease could have dire consequences for an entire community.

CHIMACUM CLIPPINGS
CHIMACUM, May 2. — Chimacum
school closed for this week on account
of a death from diphtheria in Hadlock,
but it is hoped there will be no fur-
ther cause for alarm, as people are tak-
ing every precaution against the spread
of the disease.

The old Chimacum school building was torn down in the 1930s. Growing up next door to the building, Albert J Ammeter would often tell the stories (around the dining room table) about spirited games of “broomball” which took place inside after it was vacated. When asked about the rules, the answer was always vague. The game involved brooms and a ball. Those were the most details we ever heard. Apparently, the sport was loosely based on the basic ideas of football, basketball, and perhaps a bit of hockey. The rules would change daily based on who was playing and whether the floor was wet from the leaky roof.



The New School built in 1917, Author's collection

In 1915, construction began on a modern “California type” one story structure and was placed in use in 1917. Consolidation of the little community schoolhouses was on the horizon and the new school was built to serve approximately 400 students coming from Chimacum, Hadlock, Irondale, Port Ludlow, Shine, Dabob, Center, and Nordland. The construction contract was for \$25,000 which included only the bare building and the heating system. Furniture and other equipment were not included in that cost.



*Graduation of the first class of Chimacum High School.
Front Row - L to R: John Phillips, Principal; Agnes Shaw, Madeline McClellan, Florence McClellan, Mooney Currie, Lucille Van Trojen, Edith Sophie Bengtson, Lillian Brinsmead, Bernt Anne, Teacher.
Middle Row - L to R: Clara Ness, Catherine Fraser, Lillian Hegstrom, Signe Sellin, Hazel Cowden, Bertha Bengtson, Dorothy Twiggs, Isabel Yarr, Jeanette Bass.
Back Row - L to R: Victor Enfield, Eugene Bishop, John Burnson, Harry Patterson, Arthur Robinson, John Cook, Robert Lowerre, Jack Phillips, William Bishop.*

Photo courtesy Jefferson County Historical Society

The school had 15 main rooms in addition to lavatories, offices, and numerous other small rooms. By 1947 it had been continually modernized to keep up with educational and building standards. A south wing was added in the early 1940s to provide several more rooms. With new standards and codes, the building had been rewired in the late 1930s and again in the early 1940s. It was heated by an oil furnace that was in a sunken compartment at the back of the building.

Photo Courtesy, Jefferson County Historical



School buses were used to transport students to and from the school. Once again, the community stepped up to fill the gap in transportation. There were no big yellow buses. Bruce Matheson Sr. remodeled a REO Speedwagon chassis, installed seats and side curtains for transportation in bad weather.

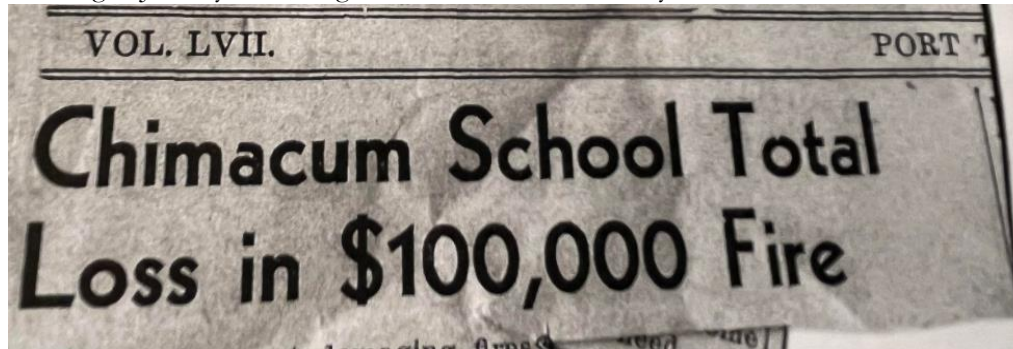


1937 Tabl Kie Chee

Music was a part of Chimacum school life long before the first band was formed. In the 1930s a music group of enthusiastic musicians, described as an “orchestra”, was formed, and performed at various community events.

Elsie Kilmer Lopeman recalled that during World War II school activities were limited, however students were actively involved in collecting tires and paper. Tires were taken into Port Townsend in support of the national war effort to collect and retread tires. Paper was collected and taken to the paper mill in Port Townsend as well.

The community was shaken to its core when the school burned to the ground. At around 1:00 a.m. on an early Monday morning in January 1947, neighbors from across the valley looked out their window and saw flames shooting up from the roof



Port Townsend Leader, January 30, 1947

of the school. The Port Townsend Fire Department was called however they were 11 miles away. Navy fire fighters from Indian Island also were called and arrived later to help fight a defensive fire and prevent sparks and other debris from spreading to adjoining buildings and nearby homes.

Gurden (Red) and Howard Bill, proprietors of Bill's Garage, arrived at the school and

recognized that the school buses were in danger. They started the buses and moved them out of danger to the nearby garbage dump. Other than papers which had been stored in a fireproof vault the only other piece of equipment which was not destroyed was a typewriter which had been taken to the *Port Townsend Leader* office for repairs. The new refrigerators and ranges in the newly remodeled home economics room were destroyed. The roof was totally gone, and the interior was gutted. There was nothing left to be salvaged.

The cafeteria building, just south of the destroyed school, was not damaged and plans were quickly formulated to turn it into classrooms. The Grange and nearby churches were utilized for classroom space. Elsie Kilmer Lopeman recalled that high school students were bused to classes at the Irondale Church.

The new gymnasium, which was a replacement for the gymnasium lost by fire only a few years earlier, was not far enough along to house new classrooms as only the footings had been constructed. Port Townsend Fire Chief, J.J. Lafferty believed the fire had started around the furnace. Citizens were wondering if the fire had been the result of arson. Rumors that it was set by a school employee were never confirmed. Other recent fires in the area raised suspicion. The exact cause was never determined.



January 30, 1947, Port Townsend Leader



Author's collection

Acting County Superintendent of Schools George Munn noted that the district had insured the building for approximately \$85,000 which was about 90% of its value. Right after the fire he indicated that it was doubtful that a replacement could be made within the year because of the difficulty in procuring materials. The school district was bonded to the maximum extent, so a new building would have to be financed with insurance monies plus an outright state grant. Within months, however, funding from insurance and from the State was available and plans were put into place to construct a new, more modern building.

The fire was the third fire at the school since 1935. In 1936 the shop building and covered play shed were destroyed. In 1944, the gymnasium was also lost to fire.

By 1948, however, funding was made available and pessimistic notions that replacement would take a long time, were negated when a new building was built and ready for occupancy.

Chimacum School kids will remember that the district office was located just to the right of the main front doors in the new brick building. A grate (that was supposed) to catch all the mud and grit before muddy feet came down the main hallway was right outside the door. The decorated windows on the left side of the building were once the windows of Miss Johnson's first grade classroom. Miss Tripp's room was on the right, just past the bathrooms. Mrs. Neudorfer's, Mrs. Bader's and Mrs. Bill's classroom were on the left. The kindergarten class was the last classroom on the left. Miss Yarr's class was on the right. (Just reminiscing a bit)

The school district began to grow. In 1952, the high school enrollment totaled 91 students. Custodians were driving buses. Teachers were driving buses and often were called on to teach two grades and were often coaching sports teams too.

4-
T
Fa
an
to
Do
so
fe
L
th
di
bl
ty
tl
C
is
lc
a
e
in
E
t
j
t
r
f
t
c
n
t
h
r
s
g
t

427 Enrolled as School Begins At Chimacum

School opened at Chimacum last week with total enrollment of 427 in the grade and high school classes, Superintendent Kenneth Ingman announced.

Opening enrollment in the elementary school totaled 336, but additions were expected to increase the total to about 350. Opening enrollment in the high school was 91, raising the over-all total to 427.

Enrollment by grades in the elementary school: First, 61; second, 40; third, 57; fourth, 47; fifth, 44; sixth, 37; seventh, 28 and eighth, 25.

Ingman said that because of heavy enrollment in the first grade, it was decided to divide the class between two teachers. Mrs. Margaret Tripp, who was slated to teach a fifth grade, teaches one first grade section, and Annie Johnson the other.

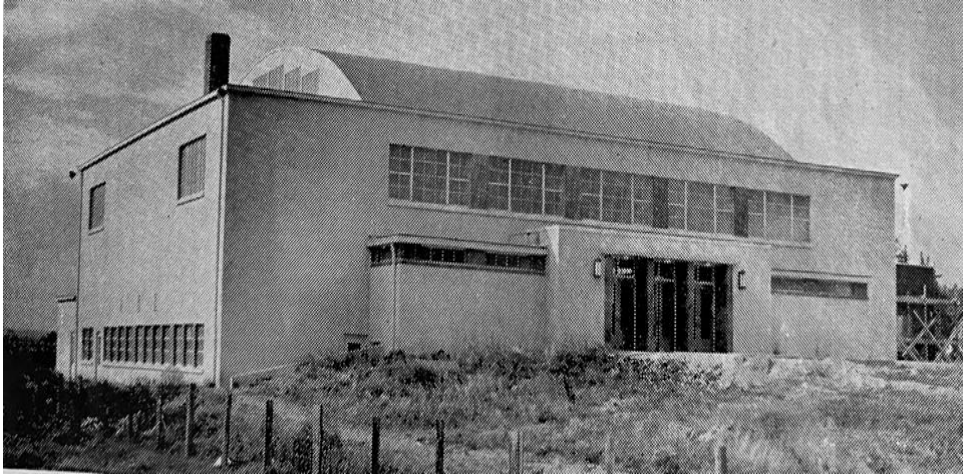
Three teachers, instead of four, as originally planned, will handle grades four and five.

Children reporting at Chimacum school found buildings in good condition for the year's beginning. Janitors are H. M. Walters, Charles Orsborn, Howard Foley and Frank McNeill. Bus drivers are about the same, the only new one being Charles Lopeman. Mrs. Ball is helping Mrs. Steele with the cooking.

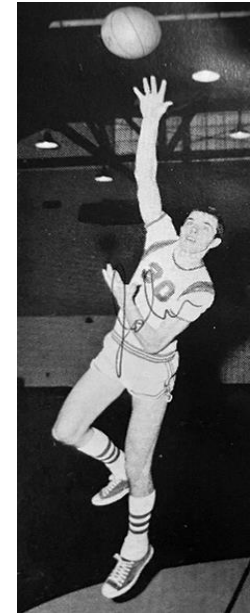
Mrs. Elton F. Guthrie, experienced public health nurse, will again be the Chimacum school nurse this year.

September 11, 1952 Port Townsend Leader

Physical education classes, basketball games, pep band performances, dances and about everything else that brought the community together took place in the “new gym” which is now the Multi-Purpose building.



Author's collection



John Edgington, Center

1968 Tabl Kie Chee

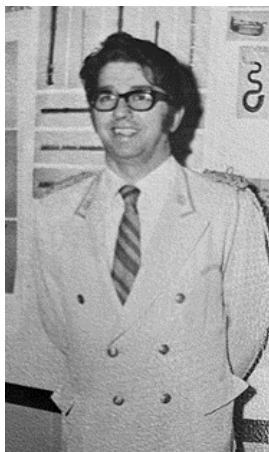


From left to right: Margaret Tripp, Dalbert Leaf, Robert Kocher, Frank McNeal, Mr. Foley, ?

The growing student body was scattered from Port Ludlow to Dabob and Shine to Irondale. Most of the students rode the school bus to and from school except for the “Chimacum proper” kids who walked the “uphill both ways” sidewalk to the school. The high school students who could afford a car (and gas, etc) were “cool” and drove themselves.

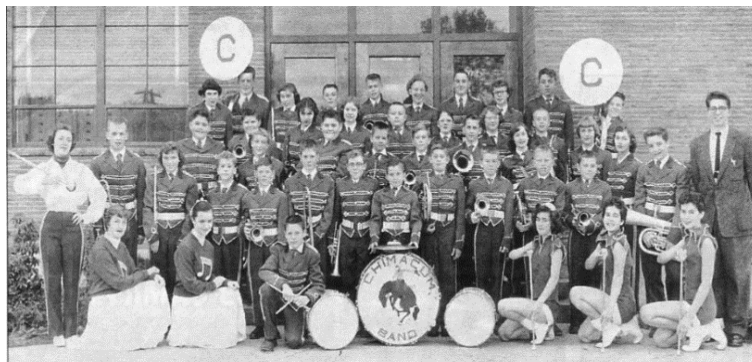
During hunting season it was not uncommon to see gun racks (and guns) in a student’s pickup truck in the parking lot for after school hunting. Times have changed.

School attendance during winter snow depended on the roads. The superintendent would call the supervisor of county roads. The ice on Center, Oak Bay, or Beaver Valley Roads would determine whether the buses would run late or at all. The superintendent or another staff member would call the television and radio station (a closely guarded telephone number) and give the status of the school for the day. During the winter when there was the slightest possibility of snow, every student in the Chimacum district would listen to Seattle station KIRO radio for school closure information. “Two hours late” was good. “Closed” was better—not just better, but fantastically better.



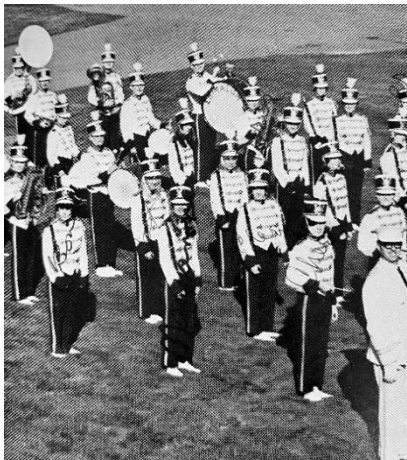
Duane Montgomery, Tabl Kie Chee 1971

Chimacum School memories always include sports and the band. When Mr. and Mrs. Duane Montgomery came to Chimacum as teachers in 1954, music became a formal part of the school experience. The Chimacum Band was formed from junior and senior high school students. Uniforms were acquired second hand. Instruments were borrowed and loaned from the community.



Chimacum Band, Tabl Kie Chee 1957

A separate high school was built in 1959. One of the main features of that project was the addition of the auditorium, often called the “House that Duane Built”. During the 1960s, funds were sourced from all sorts of fund raisers with the principal fund raiser being the Band Birthday Calendar which helped finance band uniforms and other expenses. Community members’ birthdays were placed on the appropriate month and day and the calendar was sold to about every household in the area. The calendar helped finance the new flashy blue and white uniforms which became known throughout the area. The school trophy case attested to the great band which won awards at almost every parade in which it participated. Shelton, Sequim, Victoria Days, Seafair in Seattle, and of course the Rhododendron Festival in Port Townsend were annual destinations for the band.



*Chimacum High School
Band, Tabl Kie Chee, 1969*

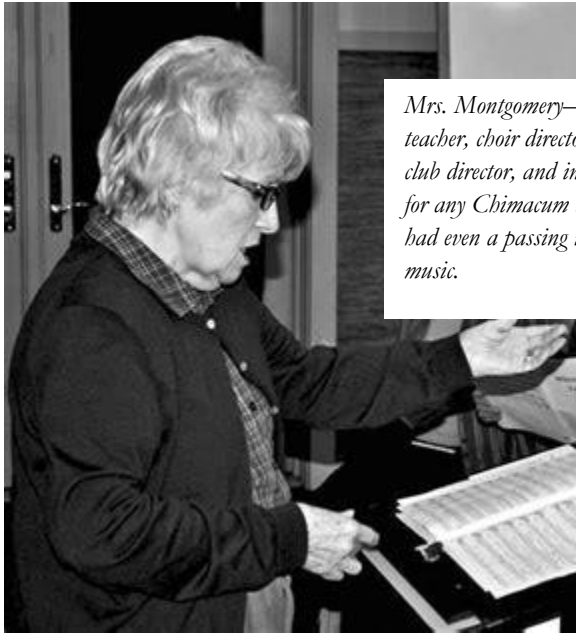
Director Montgomery often shared a dream with the band that someday the band uniform would be a “cowboy” style complete with fringe and cowboy hats. The dream came true but several years passed before it came to fruition.



Chimacum High School Band, ca 2011

The annual spring concert was a featured event for the entire community. Mrs. Mary Lou Montgomery was the music teacher and chorus director. She visited each elementary class every week to lead classes in song and provide basic music instruction. Students learned to draw the treble clef and something about “every good boy does fine”. That instruction provided a basis for additional music experiences past elementary school for some. For others, not so much. Chimacum students from the 1950s to the 1990s will recall the annual Christmas concert where each class took the stage to perform a Christmas carol. Kindergarten classes started the evening off with “Up On the Housetop” and carols were assigned to each class.

Classes would wait in their home room until a teacher arrived at the door indicating it “was time”. Students were lined up in the order in which they would take the stage and then, single file, class members got up on the stage risers.



Mrs. Montgomery—the music teacher, choir director, drama club director, and inspiration for any Chimacum student who had even a passing interest in music.

The curtain would open, bright lights were aimed on each class and Mrs. Montgomery would be smiling and encouraging everyone to sing and not just stand there. Students would try and look out into the audience to find parents and grandparents and neighbors. Thunderous applause would erupt. Mrs. Ondracek, would hit the first chord on the piano. and the music would begin. Sorry, I digressed again to reminisce about those concerts. The evening would culminate with the entire school joining in to sing “White Christmas” to an auditorium full of parents, friends, and neighbors.

Everyone showed up for the Christmas concert. Families, of course, would be in attendance along with faculty and neighbors.

Sadly the concert gave way to changing times and that tradition ended.



*Auditorium, Tabl Kie Chee,
1959*



Chimacum High School, 1960s, Author's Collection



A library was added to the campus in 1968. An addition in 1990 included a new gymnasium. The middle school was added in 1991 and was expanded along with a new shop facility in 1999. With the various additions and remodeling projects, the “old gym” built in 1952 became the Multi-Purpose building in 1981.

The Chimacum Primary School building was built in Port Hadlock in the late 1990s and has been the home for Pre-Kindergarten through second grade.



Copyright © 2023 Nancy McDaniel

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Copyright