

Reed School History

The original Reed School was located on Reed Street in the downtown San Jose area. It was named in honor of James Frazier Reed, a community leader, in the early days of San Jose. Mr. Reed was born in County Armagh, Ireland on November 14, 1800 and moved to Virginia with his mother in the early years of his life. After working many years as a miner, he moved to Illinois, helped form the city government of Springfield, became wealthy in a flourishing cabinet making business, and served in the Blackhawk War with Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas.

Mr. Reed's decision to move west resulted in the formation of the Reed-Donner Wagon Train in 1846. The California-bound train suffered many hardships in the Sierra Mountains during the winter of 1846-1847. Although many lives were lost, Mr. Reed's heroic efforts to organize and lead a rescue party are well known.

The Reed family settled on a 500-acre ranch between First Street and Coyote Creek in what is now downtown San Jose. Subsequent division of the land in 1849 resulted in the naming of Reed, Margaret, Virginia, Martha, Carrie, Patterson, Lewis, and Keyes streets in honor of Reed family members. The present day Reed School at 1524 Jacob Avenue was opened in 1959 on approximately nine acres adjoining Ross Creek near the Robertsville area of San Jose.

Our school was named after Frazier O. Reed, grandson of James Reed. Many schools built in San Jose during the 1950's and 60's were named after prominent individuals. Frazier O. Reed was a partner and president of the James A. Clayton & Co., a real estate and insurance company, president of the California Real Estate Board and the San Jose Real Estate Board, director of First National Bank for 34 years and helped found San Jose Hospital in 1921. During his long career, Reed had a hand in many of the big real estate transactions in the area. Both these Reed men were benevolent community leaders who had a vision for San Jose and its surrounding valley. The Reed School Community is proud to have its school named in honor of his family.