

Castro Valley Grammar School

John Christian, Hayward Area Historical Society

Castro Valley once had a very stately grammar school located right on the Boulevard where the Adobe Shopping Center sits today. Although it wasn't Castro Valley's first grammar school, it was certainly the most grand. The look of Castro Valley Grammar was very cutting edge and modern for the 1920s. The school was designed by architect H.C. Smith, who designed several schools in the Hayward area, including Hayward Union High School. To build the new facility, \$37,000 worth of bonds were sold. The local PTA also helped raise money by holding events, including a "Hard Times Dance" in the spring of 1922. People who arrived "too much dressed up" were charged an extra fee. Community efforts like this played an important role in getting the school built.



Castro Valley Grammar School, c. 1940

Local contractor Peter Hoare graded the roughly two-acre lot and a San Francisco builder was awarded the construction contract. When talking about the new school, Principal A. B. Morris proudly proclaimed the new school would "rival any rural school in the county". Keep in mind, Castro Valley had

a population of only about 2,000 in the 1920s. The school was dedicated in June of 1922. The concrete building stood in stark contrast to the older wooden schools that had come before it.

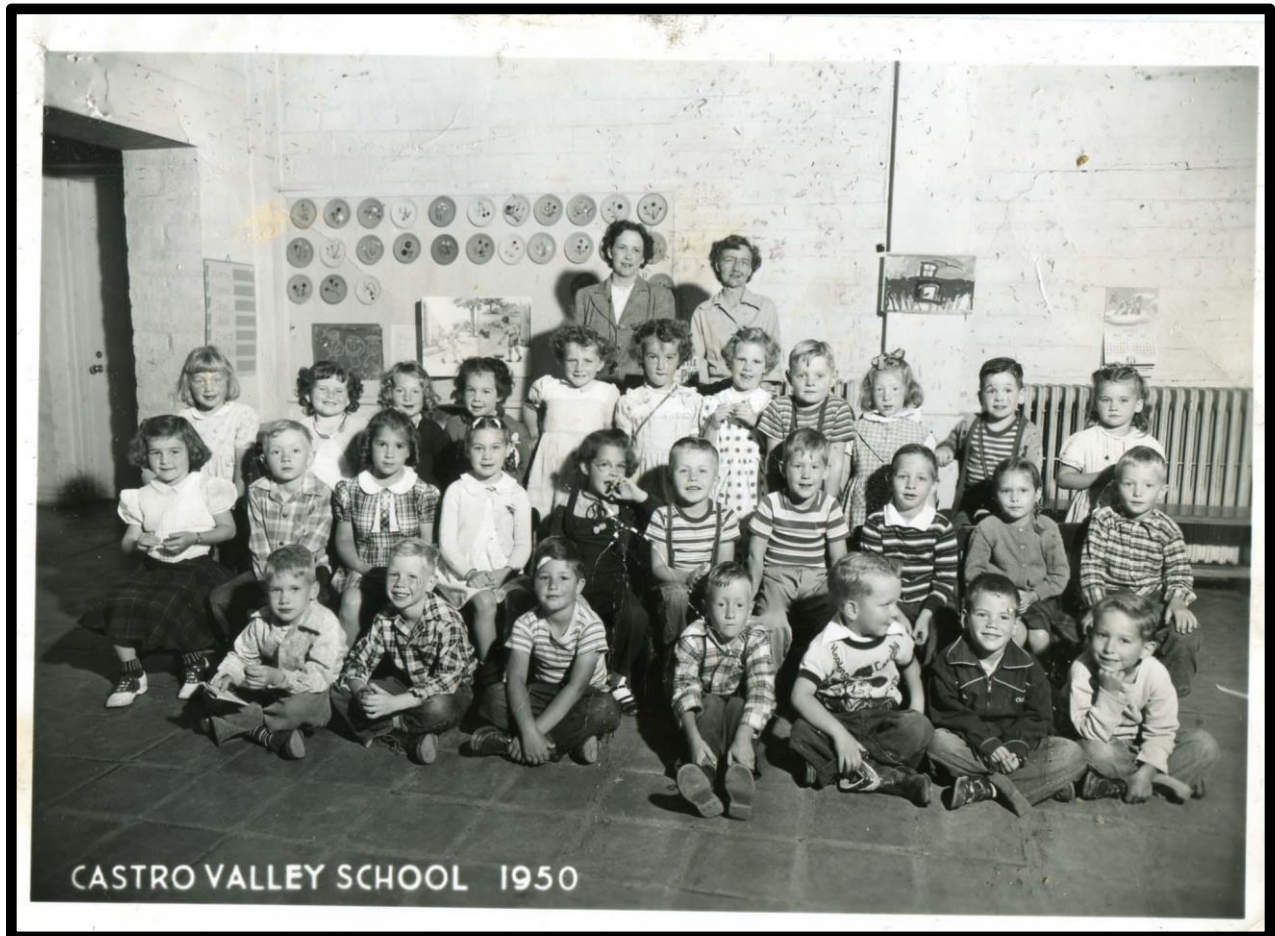
The new building helped encourage more parents to send their children to school. Enrollment jumped 45 students to a total of 180 in the first year alone. By 1932 enrollment was at 350 students. During the Great Depression, the school, like many others in the area, benefited immensely from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In 1936 \$20,000 in WPA funds allowed the school to build an auditorium. In 1937, the school received \$6,000 for its landscaping and playground. In 1938, \$15,000 more was allocated to build the Adobe Nursery School just behind the main campus. You may know this building today as the Adobe Art Center. In the school's brief history, there was scarcely a year when there wasn't some construction or expansion.



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Castro Valley 4th grade students, and instructors, September 1929

In the early 1950s, Castro Valley Grammar was bursting at the seams with over 600 students enrolled. By this time the building was beginning to show its age. In 1954 the school was condemned. It was briefly considered as a possible “little” courthouse for Alameda County, but the Board of Supervisors quickly rejected the idea claiming if it wasn’t safe for children, then it wasn’t safe for adults. Before being torn down, the building served one more important role—as the field office for the county’s massive campaign to distribute Polio vaccines to area children.



Bea Hampton’s Kindergarten Class at the Adobe Center, 1950

The site of the school was quickly purchased by a developer for about \$100,000 dollars. By February of 1956, the site was home to a brand new Purity grocery store.