



**141 W. Highland
Sierra Madre Elementary School
1930**

**History: website
<http://sierramadre.pasadenausd.org/>
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Photo: Michael Ellis

Education in early Sierra Madre began in a one-room school house, built by Mr. Carter, the town founder, in 1882. Two years later, the growing community raised funds for a larger two-room building of Victorian design, complete with a bell tower. Of historical note are the peppertrees planted by the school's headmistress which remain on the old school site, in what is now known as Kersting Court.

With the coming of the "Red Line" street car in 1905, the Victorian-style schoolhouse was taken down and replaced with a train depot. Land at Highland and Auburn was used to construct the third schoolhouse in the Craftsman style, complete with a wooden pergola gracing the front lawn. This school became an important location for community events and social gatherings. So loved was the structure that when the new school was built on the site in 1930, local residents insisted that part of the school be preserved. The wooden pergola still stands over the current lunch patio.

In order to construct a new state-of-the-art school for Sierra Madre children, a bond was issued to raise \$200,000. The bond campaign was entitled "Give the Kiddies A Chance" and resulted in the 1930 opening of the mission revival-style school we still use today. The lovely architecture makes it one of the most beautiful campuses in the district. The auditorium and cafeteria are unique with their dramatic vaulted and carved beam ceilings. The original construction included a bell tower for the historic school bell. Unfortunately, as earthquake damage took its toll on the bell tower, it could no longer house the bell. Thanks to the Sierra Madre Historical Society, the school bell was returned to its original home near the peppertrees of what is now Kersting Court, where it can be seen in its modern wooden tower frame.

The school was extensively renovated in the late 1960s at a cost of \$600,000 so it could be repaired and retrofitted to withstand further earthquake damage. During the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, middle school grades (6-8) were added to the Upper Campus (160 N. Canon) formerly known as Sierra Mesa, one half mile from the original Lower Campus (141 W. Highland). Today Sierra Madre School is a thriving PreK-8 school, with a proud heritage of academic success and a continued commitment to the visual and performing arts.



Photo courtesy Fred Krinke

Mrs. Wheeler's 6th Grade Class
September 1939 to June 1940

Students Fred Krinke and Carol Fisher (Watson) recall their classmates' names as follows:

Row 4: Margarita Gonzales, Mrs Wheeler, Margaret Richter,(?), Jimmy McCarren, Reuben Gonzales, Neal Blum

Row 3: Barbara Collins,(?), (?), (?), (?), Virginia Embree, Lavonne Babbett, Joe Cox, Fred Krinke

Row 2: Betty Spinks, (?), Carol Fisher, Joanne Thomas, (?), Norman Hernandez, Carlos Candeleras, Buddy Einsel

Row 1: Dale Spinks, Aldine Williams,(?), Katherine Dowding,Nancy Cate, Barbara West, Verginia Vierra, David Smedley, (?),