

J E N N Y T U C K E R B A K E R S C H O O L

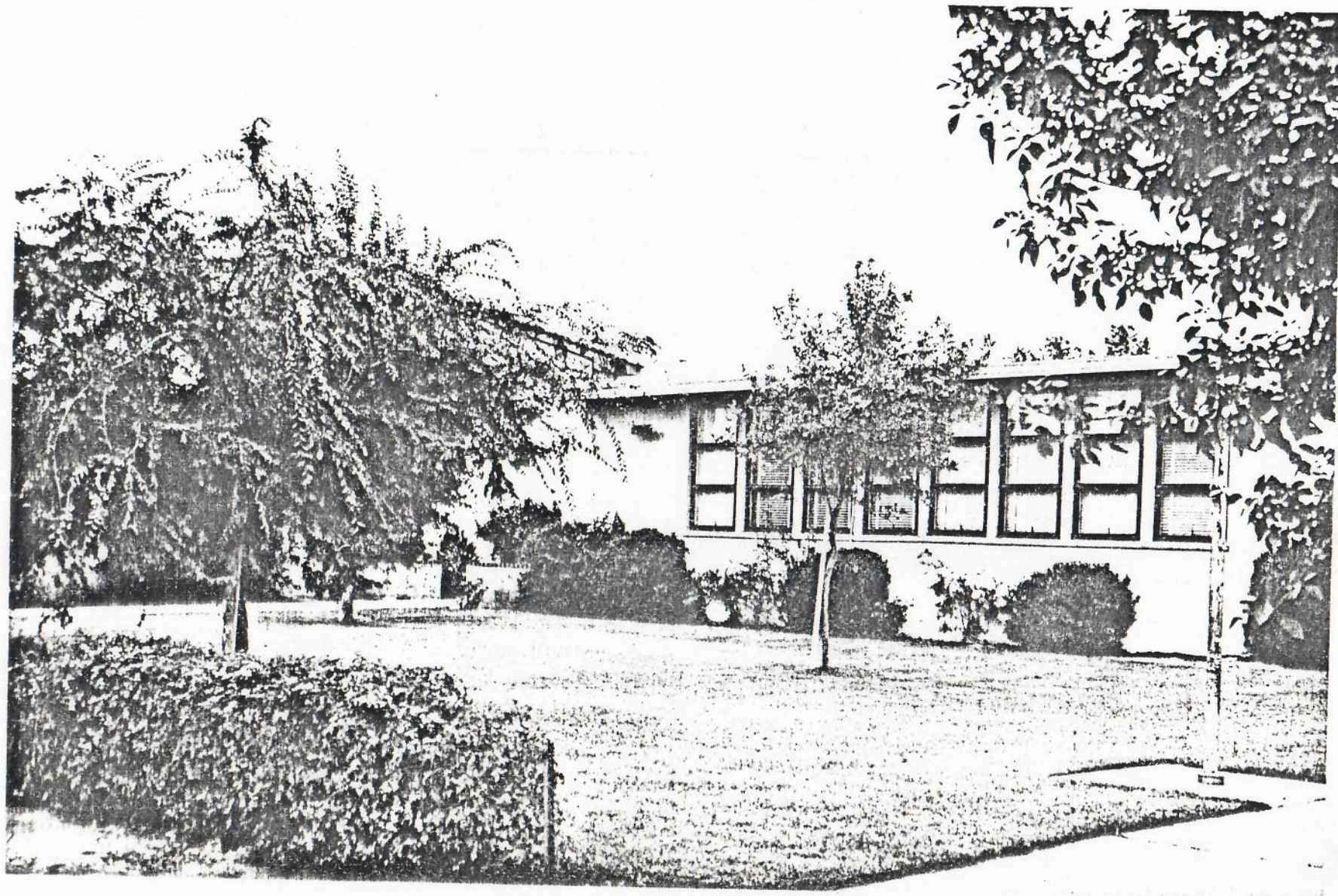
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A B I O G R A P H Y

BY:

EMILY TUCKER MARQUIS

1985



Jenny Tucker Baker School--El Monte

1958

J E N N Y T U C K E R B A K E R

PROLOGUE

In the fall of 1984 Albert Gasparian, principal of Baker School, decided it would be apropos to develop a history of Jenny Tucker Baker School.

He wanted some information on the educator (for whom the school was named). A niece of Mrs. Baker, Emily Tucker Marquis, who had taught 20 years at Baker School was contacted by Fuji Ishizu, a teacher at Baker, and asked to write an article on Mrs. Baker. That is how this biography came about.

Emily Marquis



MOTHER OF EL MONTE UNION HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION—Mrs. Jenny Tucker Baker is shown (left) as she appeared shortly after she became principal of El Monte Grammar School in 1892. Mrs. Baker is also shown (right) as she appears today after a career as an educator which covered more than half a century. She will attend her 42nd consecutive alumni dinner at 7 p. m. Saturday at El Monte Civic Center.

May 1941

They Met Through a Book Club



HALF CENTURY OF COURTSHIP—The I. F. Bakers keep the nameplate from El Monte's first cash register polished up on their front door just as Mr. Baker has been keeping his love for the pretty El Monte school teacher burnished since 1895. The Bakers live at 4058 North Maxson Road, El Monte.

2-14-51

J E N N Y T U C K E R B A K E R

HERITAGE

Jenny Esther Tucker was born in Shannock, Rhode Island, on April 12, 1866. Her family heritage was founded in the early history of Rhode Island.

Jenny's mother, Emily Sarah Cordelia Greene Tucker, was born in Charlestown, Rhode Island, in 1833. Emily was a granddaughter of Allen Greene who served as a drummer for troops in the American Revolution. Emily Greene Tucker was a distant cousin of General Nathanael Greene who served under George Washington. The Greene family has been traced to the Norman Conquest of the crown of England in 1066.

Jenny's father, William Franklin Tucker, was born in Charlestown, Rhode Island, in 1832. He was an accomplished carpenter, historian, poet and school teacher. He taught forty terms and was superintendent for ten.

William and Emily Tucker had five children, two girls and three boys. The young boys worked in the textiles mills around Charlestown. The child labor laws were not passed in the United States until the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

EDUCATION

Endowed with an educational background, Jenny was quite a scholar and graduated from Rhode Island State Normal School. Her mother had died when she was twelve and she was a big help to her father, sister and brothers. She traveled many miles each day for her education.

The Rhode Island statesman, Govenor Davies, was a friend of Jenny and discussed with her the opportunities of the west.

After she received her state diploma Jenny traveled by train to Pomona College to finish her education. She stayed with friends, Dr. Garcelan and family.

She returned to Rhode Island for the summer. In the fall her brother, Dighton, resigned from teaching and went with Jenny to California. He settled in the Long Beach area.

Jenny finished her schooling at Pomona College. She graduated in 1889.

CAREER

After Pomona College, Jenny Tucker taught school at Ojai in Ventura County.

It was in 1892 when Jenny came to El Monte to become principal of the El Monte Lexington School. She was 26 at the time.

Jenny was an instigator of a parent-teacher group, a forerunner of the P.T.A.

In the summer of 1896 she took her brother, Dighton, to Arizona. He had developed T. B. He died in Flagstaff that September. His daughter, Ethelwyn Tucker, was born a month later. Jenny had lost a sister, Annie, and a twin brother, James, to T.B. a few years before.

On May 19, 1899 Jenny founded the El Monte High School Alumni Association and never missed a meeting until 1955.

Jenny was active in the First Presbyterian Church of El Monte. She had joined in 1892. She found time to help in the Christian Endeavor youth program of that church.

WEDDING

Jenny Tucker met Mr. Isaac F. Baker through a book club. Mr. Baker had come to El Monte in 1895 and was a general merchandise store owner of El Monte, Mr. Baker and Jenny became good friends through the years.

In 1906 Mr. Baker built a lovely home in town, 141 East Main Street (Valley Boulevard). Jenny and Ike were married in the Tucker home in Providence, Rhode Island, in September 1906. Mr. Baker had panned the gold for Jenny's wedding ring when he was in the Klondike in 1897.

Their honeymoon was spent in travel. First they visited the popular summer resort in the White Mountains of New Hampshire viewing the lofty peaks such as Mount Washington. Then on they went to the Catskill Mountains of New York and then sailed down the Hudson River to New York City. From there they took a cruise to Havana, Cuba, and other islands of the Caribbean. They then entered into the Gulf of Mexico where they disembarked and completed their trip by train, crossing the Indian Territory on their way home.

MARRIAGE

When the Bakers returned to El Monte Mrs. Baker gave up her school position but continued to work for the goals of education. She was called often as a substitute teacher.

Mrs. Baker was an active member and president of the El Monte Women's Club from 1909 until 1912. She was granted a life membership in that organization.

She became a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and years later a niece, Ethelwyn Tucker Griswold, and a grandniece, Miriam

Griswold White, also joined the D.A.R.

Mr. and Mrs. Baker were active not only in church work but were always helping others. Throughout the years the Bakers opened their home to many people.

In 1909 Jenny's father became ill. She went to Rhode Island and brought him back to California. In less than 20 years Jenny had crossed the United States by train more than a dozen times. Her father lived with them from 1907 until his death in 1925, bringing his rich personality to the household.

In 1910 Mr. and Mrs. Baker persuaded Jenny's youngest and only living brother, George, to move to California with his family. They settled on a ranch near Exeter in the San Joaquin Valley.

Through the years the six nieces and nephews from the ranch visited the Bakers. It was always a joy to visit Aunt Jenny and Uncle Ike.

From 1911 to 1917 a niece, Ethelwyn Tucker, made her home with the Bakers while attending high school and college. She received her teacher's credential from Los Angeles State Normal School.

Mr. Baker, known to many as Ike Baker, was active in the Masonic Lodge and served as Chaplain for 30 years. Mrs. Baker was a charter member of the El Monte Chapter of the Eastern Star.

In 1917 Miss Jennie Ennis, a beloved cousin of Mrs. Baker, came to join the Baker family. She had been a dressmaker for years and a cannoisseur of New England cooking. She passed away in 1941.

Mrs. Baker served 18 years on the Los Angeles County Board of Education from 1917 to 1935. She helped plan the curriculum of Los Angeles County schools and was president of the board for six years.

In the middle twenties a nephew, Franklin Tucker, made his home with the Bakers for several years. Another nephew, Russell Tucker, spent many

autumn seasons with the Bakers to help them harvest their walnut crop. This lasted until the Bakers subdivided in the early thirties. Their grove bordered on Maxson Road.

In 1931 the Bakers moved their house in town to their walnut grove on Maxson Road. A niece, Mary Tucker, and a nephew, Harold Tucker, spent several months with them at that time.

The Baker house was located at the corner of Maxson Road and Kerrwood Street. The Pacific Electric Red Car line was a block from the house. Mrs. Baker commuted to Los Angeles on the red cars while she served on the County Board of Education.

In 1932 another niece, Emily Tucker, came to live with the Bakers while she attended college. She graduated from U.C.L.A. in 1936 and began teaching in the Mountain View School District that same year. Her home was with the Bakers until her marriage in 1940.

The Baker home was always the focus of reunions for friends and family.

RECOGNITION

Mr. and Mrs. Baker were well known in El Monte after a lifetime of dedicated service to their community.

When Mrs. Baker was 75 she was given the honor of having the new school at 12043 Exline Street named for her. It was the second school for the Mountain View School District. It was dedicated Jenny Tucker Baker School in 1941. She was deeply touched by this honor. In the twilight of her years it was a rewarding experience.

The Bakers lived their active retired years in their home on Maxson Road enjoying friends and relatives. Mr. Baker passed away October 16, 1951 at the age of 86. Jenny Tucker Baker died at the age of 93 on August 9, 1959.