

PH0661015

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

H & R S

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATA SHEET

RECEIVED JAN 24 1978

DATE ENTERED JUN 13 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC COLUSA GRAMMAR SCHOOL

RECEIVED

AND/OR COMMON

Colusa City Hall

NOV 10 1977

OHP

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

425 Webster Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Colusa

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

4th Congressional District

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Colusa

CODE

011

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

X PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

X GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Colusa Unified School District

STREET & NUMBER

400 Fremont Street

CITY, TOWN

Colusa

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Assessor's Office, County of Colusa, Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

547 Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Colusa

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                     |                                       | CHECK ONE                                     | CHECK ONE                              |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD                 | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED              | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR                 | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |   | DATE <u>Nov. 7, 197</u>                |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This Tudor Gothic Revival style structure of two full storeys over a partial basement comprises approximately 32,000 square feet, with overall dimensions of 174' X 143".

The building is in excellent structural condition, having served the community continually as an elementary school from its dedication until 1976. There is superficial damage to plasterwork and some to wood trim and casings because of water infiltration from a poorly maintained roof.

Exterior walls are of brick masonry, reinforced in thicknesses of 12" or 16". The first floor corridor system is entirely encased in reinforced concrete; floors, walls and ceiling. Likewise is the ramp system to the second floor with the exception of the second floor ceiling. The auditorium floor is also concrete with a wood overlay. The heater room under a portion of the auditorium is roofed with 10" deep reinforced concrete joists at 24" on center.

Second floor framing consists of full 2 X 16's at 16" O.C. typically with smaller members at lesser spans. The second floor ceiling is framed with 2 X 12's and less, depending on the span. There is an attic over the second floor with about four feet of clearance varying with the essentially flat roof's slope for drainage. A parapet conceals the roof and skylights.

Floor to ceiling heights on both levels are 13' 0". The auditorium ceiling at its maximum is just under 30' high, and the auditorium itself has an overall dimension of approximately 90' X 50'.

The building's exterior appearance is virtually unchanged from the time of its opening. Its red "ruffled" brick exterior lavishly overlaid with terra cotta ornamentation needs only minor repair and the replacement of a very few missing ornamental members.

A later wing, connected by a covered walkway, provided additional space for classrooms. This wing remains; however, the connecting link is to be removed so that the building will again stand alone as it was originally built.

*Wing connected to main building  
(Ran McGuire - 1976) - (Krautham) 5-1-78*

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD                                    | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC      | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION   | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES April 11, 1918

BUILDER/ARCHITECT W. H. Weeks, architect

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Architectural Significance.** The Colusa Grammar School is one of Central California's last remaining intact examples of pre-World War I Gothic Revival architecture in school design. At the same time it is one of the area's first examples of significant poured-in-place, reinforced concrete multi-level construction; and, for its time, one of the most innovative and revolutionary examples of school design in terms of life safety, circulation, mechanical and ventilating systems.

The exterior walls are of a textured "ruffled" red brick on a cast stone wainscot base. All corners are quoined with terra cotta blockwork, and the walls are decoratively capped with the same. All apertures are lavishly overlaid with exquisitely detailed Gothic Revival ornament, including fine tracery and beautiful (although non-functioning) balconies.

It was a building full of architectural innovation for its time. It is evident that fire safety weighed heavily in the conceptual thinking underlying the structure's design. The ramps rather than stairs (eliminating the most hazardous of panic traps), concrete shells around corridor and ramps, and the many outward opening exterior doors all bear witness. The heating system is central forced air, a considerable achievement of modern technology for its time. The stacked hopper-type windows, each individually shaded to provide simultaneous ventilation and sun control, were another in an impressive array of amenities, conveniences and delights that mark this building.

Of note is the beautifully executed plasterwork which embellishes the 650 seat auditorium. (1100 Colusans and friends were in it for the dedication!) The ornate procenium arch is emblazoned with twenty-one gothic shields, which were painted in the colors of these nations which comprised the "civilized" world of the early twentieth century. Interestingly, we find the Entente Allies, United States, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium, in the most prominent position while (quoting a newspaper of the day) "this bunch of baby killers and ruffians, Bulgaria, Austria, Turkey and Germany..." are consigned to the obscurity of the extreme left edge.

In summary, this building, hailed at its dedication as perhaps the finest school building in the state if not the nation, provides an historical, technical and architectural legacy so great as to make the building's preservation an imperative.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Tri-Weekly Colusa Sun, Colusa, California, 1916-17-18.

The Colusa Herald, Colusa, California, 1916-17-18.

The Colusa Sun Herald, Colusa, California, 1975-76-77.

Robert E. Mackensen, A.I.A., Martin and Mackensen, Inc., Marysville, California, 1977.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 10 585640 4340210  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                 
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C               

D               

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The north 1.5 acres of block 93, said block shown on Assessor's Map of the City of Colusa, Bk. 1, pg. 19, County of Colusa, 1970.

The building site is bounded on the west by Fifth street, on the south by the James M. Burchfield Elementary School grounds, on the east by Fourth street and on the north by Webster street.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | None | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|------|--------|------|
| STATE |      | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jane F. Carter, Chairman

ORGANIZATION

Heritage Preservation Committee, City of Colusa

DATE

November 7, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

909 Oak Street

TELEPHONE

916-458-4476

CITY OR TOWN

Colusa

STATE

California

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Kroy M. Ellison*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 1/17/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Carlson Cole*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*6/13/78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*6-5-78*

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Historical Significance. The first public school in Colusa opened in the old courthouse in 1855 with 29 children and a budget of \$329. It was a small and inauspicious beginning for the city which was to finance and build a school in 1918 considered the finest in the state of California.

In 1861 the first school house was erected at Fourth and Jay streets. Ten years later the predecessor of the Colusa Grammar School was constructed with the building and the furniture valued at \$18,000. It was located on Webster street between Fourth and Fifth streets and was called the Webster Public School.

There was an additional wing to this building in 1875, and a few years later another building on the same site was erected, part of which was used for a high school until in 1902 bonds were voted for the first Colusa High School.

The movement for a new school building was started in 1916. Largely through the efforts of Geroge W. Moore, then principal of the Colusa Grammar School, assisted by teachers and pupils, the need for a larger and better equipped building was brought to the attention of parents and citizens.

A bond issue of \$65,000. was voted in 1916. When this was found to be inadequate because of increased building and material costs as a result of the war, the voters approved, 370 to 137, an additional \$20,000. It was reported in the November 17, 1916 edition of The Colusa Herald, "for the purpose of erecting a grammar school building in Colusa 'that will be at the same time the pride and the glory of the community during the years of the future'."

There was a conflict over the site location of the new school, and in February of 1917 the trustees elected not to have the question of the location of the Colusa Grammar School decided at a meeting in the Town Hall and submitted the question to the voters. Members of the board of trustees were Thomas Rutledge, Dr. E.S. Holloway, and I. G. Zumwalt. Selection of the site occupied at the time by the Webster Public School was the result.

Following demolition of the old grammar school and during construction of the new school, the younger children, grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 attended classes in four rooms rented from the convent. Fourth grade classes were later moved to the high school auditorium,

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and in the Fall of 1917 split sessions were held with grade 4 beginning at 8:00 A.M. until noon and grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 beginning at 12:15 P.M. until 4:00 P.M.

On April 11, 1918 the Colusa Grammar School opened to "300 happy children". Newspapers heralding a new era in Colusa schools reported the cost of the building at \$100,000. The faculty included:

George P. Barnes, Principal  
Miss Nina Allgaier  
Miss Orlean Herd  
Miss Alice Myers  
Miss Laveta Carpenter  
Miss Myrtle Hicok  
Miss Cella Cain  
Miss Regent Cook  
Miss Marguerite Hankins

The country was experiencing the tragedy of World War I, and the United States was actively involved by 1918 when the school was dedicated.

Headlines in The Tri-Weekly Colusa Sun ran, "Huns Start Another Drive" and in The Colusa Herald, "Overscribes Liberty Bond Quota, Allotment by County Exceeded by \$50,000., Great Mass Meeting Saturday." The Colusa Herald reported, "Battle with German Divers" (submarines) and "Heavy Cannonade on West Front."

America was sending men, supplies and arms to Europe to help the Allies defeat the German forces of the Kaiser.

On the evening of Tuesday, April 9, 1918 at the dedication of the Colusa Grammar School the featured speaker Will C. Wood, commissioner of secondary education and candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, appropriately directed the major portion of his address to the great world tragedy and the importance of a proper education-- "a patriotic education."

The program included the national hymns of the Allies, the United States, France, England and Italy, performed by the grammar school orchestra and the chorus. The Colusa Herald reported "a spirited rendition of the American National Anthem" was sung by the chorus and that "the Italian patriotic song was sung by a number of Italian school children in their native tongue."

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There was also a patriotic drill choreographed by the program chairman, Marguerite Hankins. Although the capacity of the auditorium was 650, there were 1100 people present at the dedication of Colusa's beautiful new grammar school building.

The architect, W.H. Weeks of San Francisco, was regrettably unable to attend. In a letter to Dr. E. S. Holloway, President of the Board of Trustees, he wrote of his "admiration for the generous way in which you have provided the means by which it was possible to build such a magnificent school. The people should take their hats off to the trustees for their untiring attention to every detail of the construction. The district can never pay you for the unselfish way in which you have sacrificed time, money and business interests to the end that Colusa should have a building first-class in every particular, and a big dollars worth for every dollar spent."

C.C. Pittman, general foreman of the construction for J.S. Hannah, the builder, called the building one of the finest structures in the state and gave credit to "Dr. E. S. Holloway's close watch" for a building "perfect and the climax in modern school construction."

In making a commentary on Holloway's dedication to the project, I.G. Zumwalt, a trustee along with Charles de St. Maurice serving on the board with Dr. Holloway, was quoted as saying, "Dr. Holloway had a little book containing the description and location of every big brick in the structure in a pocket next to his heart."

The Colusa Grammar School building added another achievement to an already long list for W.H. Weeks, a recognized authority on school house design and planning, school house problems and educational requirements.

Wm. C. Bruce, editor of the American School Board Journal, wrote to Mr. Weeks, "I think I echo a general opinion that your school house work is the best in the state of California, and that it ranks with the best in any part of the country."

In northern California W.H. Weeks designed schools in Quincy, Grass Valley, Susanville, Napa, Woodland, Eureka, Healdsburg, completing over 200 schools in California during his working lifetime.

One of his largest projects was the Casino and Natatorium with cottages in Santa Cruz. He designed many Carnegie Libraries and Christian Churches (he was a member). Locally he designed the J.J.O'Rourke Building in addition to the school.

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The Colusa Grammar School served the community as a public school for 58 years until 1976 when the new James M. Burchfield Elementary School opened. With the conversion of the old Colusa High School to a junior high school in 1964 the grammar school housed only grades Kindergarten through 5 until its close.

In 1976 the City of Colusa began negotiations with the Colusa Unified School District for the purchase of the school building to be used for a city hall. The school district had contracted to demolish the old building in conjunction with the construction of the new school.

Negotiations were completed in 1977, and the City of Colusa took possession of the building on May 1, 1977 under a lease-purchase option agreement at a cost of \$33,000.

The City Council upon the recommendation of the Heritage Preservation Committee and the City Planning Commission designated the Colusa Grammar School as an historical landmark on August 29, 1977. The building will be dedicated as the new City Hall and as an historical landmark on December 14, 1977 at an open house and "Christmas Sing" and reception with all in the community invited to attend.

Bibliography.

The Tri-Weekly Colusa Sun, Colusa, California, 1916-17-18.

The Colusa Herald, Colusa, California 1916-17-18.

American School Board Journal, 1917.

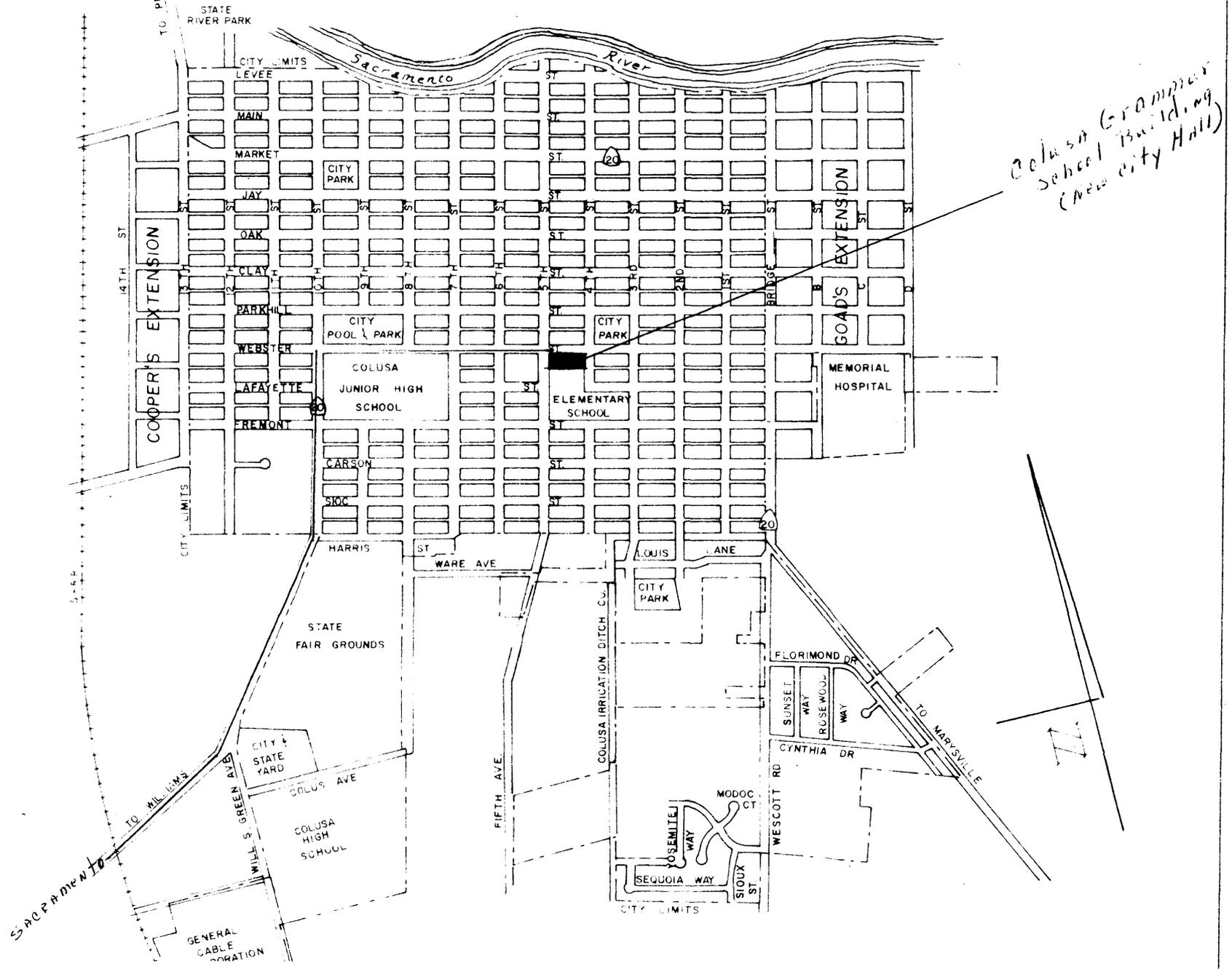
Architect and Engineer, California 1917.

The Colusa Sun Herald, Colusa, California 1975-76-77.

Robert E. Mackensen, A.I.A., Martin and Mackensen, Inc. Marysville, California, 1977.

Betty Lewis, Biographer of W.H. Weeks, unpublished, Watsonville, California, 1977.

Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, State of California, Sacramento, Ca. 1977.



Colusa Grammar School Building (New City Hall)

