

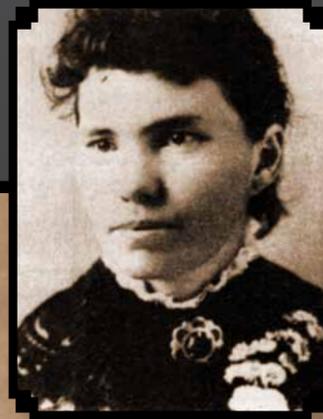
# MESA SCHOOLS



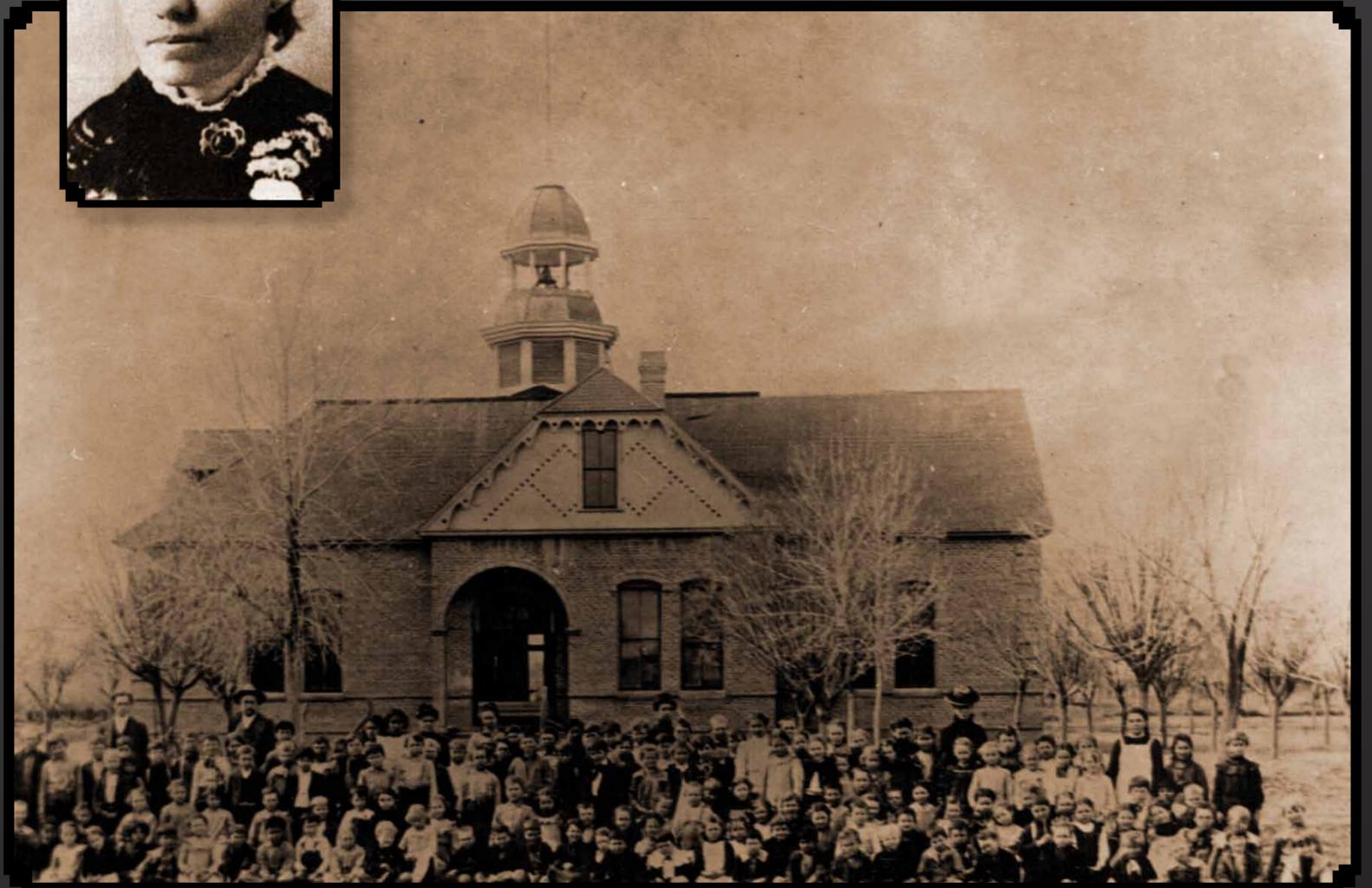
# From Brush to Adobe, Mesa's First Schools

The first school was built in Mesa in 1879. The brush shed was presided over by teacher **Mary Ursula Pomeroy**. Children were required to attend school unless it was necessary for them to work in the fields. Many students attended school until they were 12 to 14 years old.

By In 1882, the first permanent school was an adobe building constructed at the corner of Center and Second Ave. in order to meet the demands of a growing population. By 1883 when Mesa was incorporated, more than 300 people had settled the area.



Mary Ursula Pomeroy



Mesa's First School

# Crops, Shelter, Schools



Lehi School 1902

In 1890 the first Brick School, Lincoln School, was constructed at the site of the Adobe School. The Lincoln School was later demolished on 1920 as other schools soon followed.

Two schools are now historic sites, the Lehi and Irving Schools.

## *Quick Fact:*

*It was not uncommon for children to do their morning farm chores before getting ready for school. There were cows to be milked and animals to be cleaned, fed and watered. Could you image doing all this before going to school today?*

# The 1918 Flu Epidemic



Lincoln School

By the fall of 1918, the Spanish Flu epidemic that had caused widespread death across the world, reached Mesa. It struck quickly, often killing its victims within hours. To halt the epidemic, Mesa closed churches, theaters, and schools. During the epidemic, the Franklin School was converted to an emergency hospital. For those who could pay for hospital care, the cost was \$15 per week.

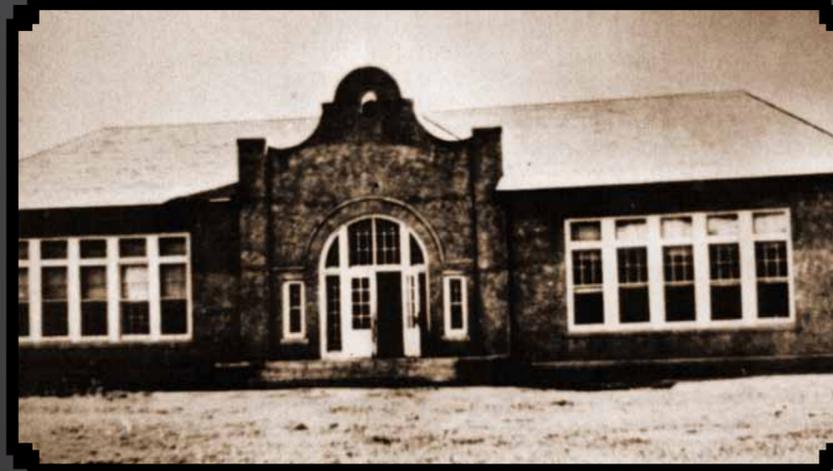
## *Quick Fact:*

*The Flu epidemic killed more people than the Great War, known today as World War I (WWI), at somewhere between 20 and 40 million people. It has been cited as the most devastating epidemic in recorded world history.*

# Segregated Schools



Daniel Webster School



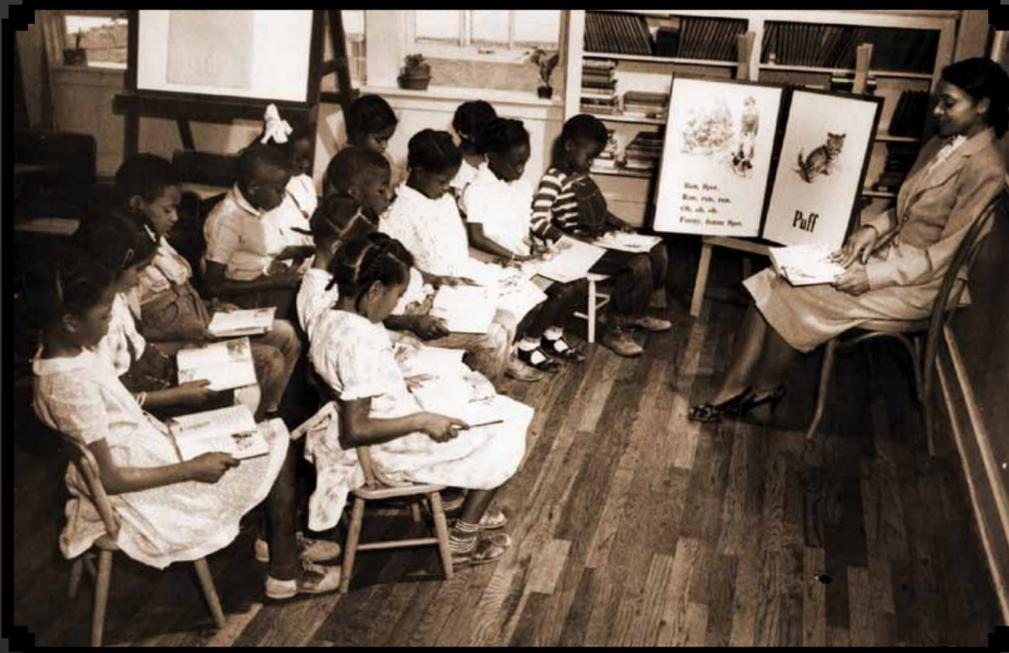
Booker T. Washington School

Like other communities across America, Mesa had segregated schools. In the early days of Mesa, any student could attend any Mesa school. This began to change in the 1910's as the minority population began to grow. In 1911, the **Daniel Webster School** was originally established to teach students of Hispanic decent and later included African-American students, however the groups were separated into different classrooms.

In 1920, Mesa built the **Booker T. Washington School** for African-American students the school was located in the Washington Park area just north of downtown.

Although elementary schools were segregated, Mesa Jr. High and Mesa High were never segregated. Mesa began to integrate schools years before the U.S. Supreme Court ruled hat segregated schools were unconstitutional in 1954.

# Veora Johnson



Veora Johnson teaching at Washington School, ca, 1950

In 1927, **Veora Johnson** became the first African-American teacher in Mesa and the first black administrator in Arizona. She also served as the curriculum and primary education consultant for the City. Active in the civic life of the community, She won numerous awards including Mesa's Citizen of the Year. After retiring in 1974, Johnson was honored by the naming of the Veora Johnson Elementary School in Mesa.

## *Quick Fact:*

*In the 1800's and early 1900's the school teacher would walk to school from a farm where she was staying with a family or drive out from a nearby town in a horse and buggy. It was the teacher's responsibility to prepare the classroom and get a fire going in the stove before the day began.*

# Mesa's First High School



The first high school classes in Mesa began in 1899. Mesa Union High School (Old Main) was built in 1908. It was Mesa's only high school for nearly 60 years. The school was a gathering place for the community. Mesa was devastated when the school caught fire and burned to the ground in 1967. It was rebuilt at its current location in East Mesa. The school was known for its marching squad, the Rabbettes. The group of 100 young women marched, roped, and twirled their way across the state through from 1937-1974.



The Rabbettes,  
Mesa High School  
precision marching  
team.

## *Quick Fact:*

*Mesa High Schools Mascot is a Jackrabbit, their motto is "Carry On" and their school colors are purple and gold.*

# Mesa's School System Today

Today, Mesa boasts 56 elementary schools, three junior high schools, six high schools, and serves 69,000 students, it is the largest, in terms of student enrollment, unified school district in Arizona.

## *Quick Fact:*

*Mesa Public Schools are nationally recognized for student achievement in academics, sports, creative and performing arts, and career and technical programs.*

*GreatSchools.org named MPS a top-10 district with the best public schools among big cities nationwide.*

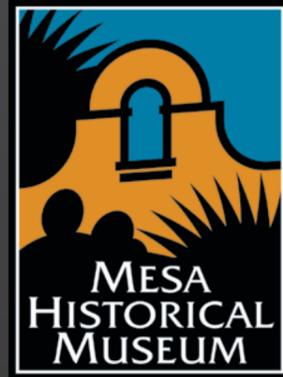
*Mesa Public Schools has been named the No. 1 district for graduation rates among the nation's 50 largest districts.*

# College Town

Once a sleepy agriculture town, Mesa has evolved into becoming the 37th largest City in America. The City has made a conscious decision to become an educational boomtown. Over the past two years alone, the City has added four liberal arts colleges to the downtown area including Benedictine, Westminster, Wilkes, and Albright Universities. Along with Mesa Community College, Arizona State Polytechnic, and A.T. Still University, Mesa now boasts the most college educational choices in the Valley.



Aerial view of Mesa Community College from Southern and Dobson.  
MCC Photo



For more information please visit  
the Mesa Historical Museum website at  
<http://www.mesamuseum.org>