

Three engines moved Commerce High in 1913



COMMERCE HIGH SCHOOL—AND HOW IT GREW The old building and the new

### Old School To Close Permanently

By ORR KELLY

Aileen Hennessy, a calm, gray-haired lady who has been at the High School of Commerce since 1919, longer than any other teacher, clearly remembers Colonel Charles H. Murphy.

"If he were still alive," she stated confidently one day last week, "Commerce would not be dying. But Commerce is dying, and on June 13, 1952, by order of the Board of Education, it will be dead."

Miss Hennessy, who will retire this year as head of the school's mathematics department, said she would never forget the portly colonel with his military stiffness, his bristly mustache and his sharply pressed blue serge suits.

Least of all, she said, will she ever forget the classic fire drills that were held at Commerce while Colonel Murphy was principal, from 1900 to 1925.

"He would stand at the door of the 'Old Building' over there and beat on a big brass school bell," she said. "We all had to march out in step while he beat on the bell. You'd be surprised how fast we could clear out of the building."

But he was stern. One day two teachers just walked out—not in step. We had to go through the drill all over again."

It was Colonel Murphy, politician, National Guard officer, club man and "not what you would call a professional educator," who made the High School of Commerce what it is—and where it is—as Miss Hennessy remembers it.

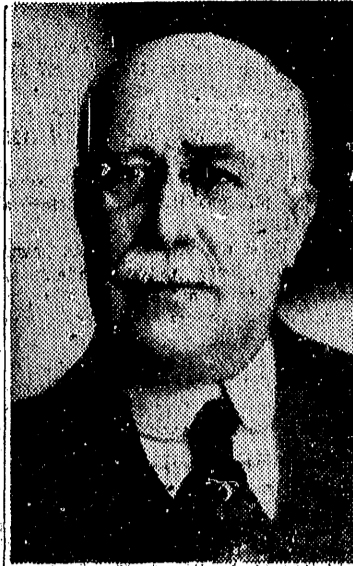
The story begins in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, at a time beyond the clear memory of most persons now living.

There were in San Francisco at that time just two public high schools, Boys High School and Girls High School. In July 1883, a commercial department was organized in Boys High School.

The next year, the commercial department was given two-year status, named Commercial High School and installed in its own quarters at Powell near Clay street. The enrollment was 38 pupils.

TRAINING FOR GIRLS It was at the time one of three public schools in the United States sufficiently forward-looking to provide training for the daring young ladies who intended to invade the previously forbidden world of business.

By 1891, new quarters had to be found for the school at Bush and Stockton streets because the enrollment had swelled to 450. Three years later a manual training department was added and Polytechnic High School came into being. The commercial department moved again in 1900 to the rear of Lincoln Grammar School, near



COLONEL C. H. MURPHY He saved the typewriters

where the Emporium now stands at Market and Fifth streets. In that same year, Colonel Murphy, then 45 years old, became principal of the school. He had been a teacher at Commerce for 10 years and, before that, superintendent of schools in Tulare county.

THEN THE FIRE The fire that swept across downtown San Francisco in the wake of the early-morning earthquake on April 18, 1906, burned Commercial High School to the ground. But Colonel Murphy fought his way to the school and moved out the schools' most important asset—83 typewriters.

About the same time that morning, a housewife out on the other side of Van Ness avenue, far from the flames that were crackling west from the waterfront, arose, put her family's breakfast on the stove and struck a light.

The fire that resulted when her match ignited gas from a broken main swept east through Hayes Valley, leveling a score of city blocks in what has come to be known as the "Horn and Eggs Fire." This secondary fire caused the only extensive damage west of Van Ness avenue and leveled the area where the High School of Commerce now stands in the block bounded by Van Ness avenue and Hayes, Franklin and Fell streets.

In that area previously were a flower shop, a bootblack stand, the mansion of James Van Ness, mayor of San Francisco in 1856, and St. Ignace College and Church, which stood on the land now used by the High School of Commerce as an athletic field.

THE TYPEWRITERS The earthquake and fire forced an early closing of the city's schools that year simply because most of them, like Commercial High School, had been burned down. But by the end of the second week in June, 280 of the 800 Commercial High School students had reported at Emerson School and re-enrolled.



AILEEN HENNESSY She remembers

Colonel Murphy had saved from destruction to write letters to all parts of the world asking for contributions to a fund of \$40,000 to help rebuild the city's schools. In the fall of 1906, the students of Commercial High School moved into Mission High School and remained there, on a part-time basis, for the next four years.

On May 11, 1908, a bond issue was voted, providing enough money for the construction of a new Commercial High School building in what is now Civic Center Plaza, opposite the Civic Auditorium. It was built on the site of what was until the fire, Harrison Primary School.

NAME CHANGED TWICE The new school building was by far the largest, most permanent-looking home that Commerce had ever had. It was three stories high with a basement and 31 classrooms. It had a steel frame with a pressed brick and terra cotta exterior and cost \$282,872.37.

In 1909, the name of the school was changed to Newton J. Tharp Commercial School, in honor of the city architect who designed the building and then died before it was completed. But before the new school was dedicated on December 14, 1910, the name was changed back to San Francisco Commercial School.

Two years later, the course at the school was changed from two to four years, making it the same length as terms in the other San Francisco high schools, and on December 12, 1913, the name was changed, once again, to High School of Commerce, the name by which it is still known today.

Commerce, as students and alumni of the school call themselves, say that their school is, next to Girls High School, which is also due to be closed soon, the oldest high school in San Francisco.

"They base their controversial claim on the fact that Boys High School, which is now known as Lowell High School, did not change its name to Lowell until 1924—10 years after Commerce got its name. The High School of Commerce,

### It Pioneered In Its Field In the U. S.

with its new and permanent name, was hardly established when the citizens of San Francisco, beginning to see daylight above the charred ruins of their city, decided to construct a Civic Center. So the city traded the Board of Education its library site at Fell and Franklin streets for the Commerce site in the proposed Civic Center Plaza.

Immediately, the question of what to do with the fine, new, quarter of a million dollar high school arose. It was finally decided that an attempt should be made to move the 8000-ton building to the new site.

THE BIG MOVE W. S. Langrille, a Chicago contractor who was visiting San Francisco at the time, said that if the job could be done it would be the greatest engineering feat of its kind in the history of the world. On February 15, 1913, a contract for \$161,000 was awarded to the Sound Construction and Engineering Co. of Seattle. The contract provided that the company would have to build a new school for the city if Commerce fell apart during its five-block voyage.

The Seattle company sub-contracted the job to the Nicholas & Handley Co. for \$90,000 and put up a \$70,000 bond to guarantee that the building wouldn't be damaged in transit.

For the job the contractors gathered together 2000 steel rollers, each two feet long; 20,000 oak wedges; 100,000 red cedar shingles for wedges; 1,500,000 board feet of lumber; 150 tons of steel and five miles of steel cable.

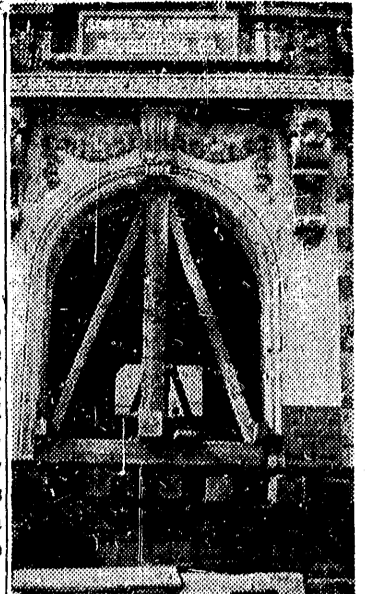
The building was jacked up off its 120 by 140 foot base and hooked by cables to three donkey engines. On the day the big move began, the donkeys huffed and puffed and dragged Commerce 20 feet west.

During the next seven and a half months the building was moved across the sandpile where the City Hall now stands to Van Ness avenue, down Van Ness to Hayes and then cater-corner from the Hayes-Van Ness corner to the Fell-Franklin corner.

The building, moving an average of 25 feet a day, blocked Van Ness avenue for 20 days and cut service on the Hayes street trolley line for a similar period. Two suits were filed against the contractors during the trip because the big building blocked the street.

By May 1, 1914, Commerce was in its new position where it still stands and is known as the "Old Building."

(Concluded Tomorrow)



A COMMERCE HIGH CENT Once it was the newest ADVERTISEMENT

## TO YOUNG MEN WHO WANT TO GET AHEAD

Advice from The WALL STREET JOURNAL

You are living in a period of far-reaching changes. New inventions, new industries, and new ways of doing business are creating opportunities for men who want to get ahead.

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### Stanford Graduation to Hear Clark Kerr

Special to The Chronicle STANFORD UNIVERSITY, May 31—The principal speaker at Stanford's 81st commencement exercises on June 15 will be Clark Kerr, chancellor-designate of the University of California's Berkeley campus.

He will address 2475 graduates on "The Independent Spirit" in the Frost Amphitheater. Stanford's President Wallace Sterling will render 1245 bachelor degrees and 1230 advanced degrees at the ceremony.

Dr. Albert C. Outler, theology professor at Southern Methodist University, will deliver the baccalaureate sermon in Stanford Memorial Chapel the morning of commencement.

Pre-commencement activities will close Saturday with the Phi Beta Kappa address of Professor Eugene Anderson, head of the Henry Shaw School of Botany at Washington University, St. Louis.

### THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO PRESENTS Your Superior Court!

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The Bar Association of San Francisco is an organization of approximately 1700 San Francisco lawyers dedicated "to acting in the interest of San Francisco by maintaining a skilled, humane and independent judiciary."

### THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO RECOMMENDS THESE JUDGES FOR YOUR APPROVAL AND SUPPORT

<b>OFFICE NO. 1</b>  Judge H. A. Van der Zee	<b>OFFICE NO. 2</b>  Judge Thos. Foley	<b>OFFICE NO. 3</b>  Judge Geo. Schonfeld	<b>OFFICE NO. 4</b>  Judge Melvyn Cronin
<b>OFFICE NO. 5</b>  Judge Wm. F. Travorse	<b>OFFICE NO. 6</b>  Judge R. McWilliams	<b>OFFICE NO. 7</b>  Judge John B. Molinari	

OFFICE NO. 7 is the only contested Superior Court Office in this election. Presiding Judge of the Municipal Court John B. Molinari was the choice of the lawyers in the secret ballot plebiscite conducted by the Bar Association of San Francisco. Judge Molinari received more votes than the combined total of his two opponents.

### VOTE FOR THESE JUDGES TUESDAY, JUNE 3

### Mission High Seniors Win Scholarships

This is the time of year that girls and boys in high school begin to worry about final examinations and what they are going to do later on. At least this is the worry of a good many students.

But two girls and three boys at Mission High School have the next few years pretty well in hand, and since their marks on last year's finals added up to 24 A's and a few miserable B's, the coming examinations aren't much of a worry.

Willa Mae Angel, for one, knew what she wanted and got it. She wanted to go to Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, N. Y. In September she'll be going there. She is the first public high school girl in the city to win a scholarship offered by the Bay Area Vassar Club.

Miss Angel, the 17-year-old secretary of her class, won the beginning of an education at the leading women's college in competitive examinations and after a five-woman interview.

Barbara Nordstedt, 18, has a scholarship to St. Luke's School of Nursing; Don Kafka, 18, an all-city quarter-back, won an engineering scholarship at Stanford; Alvin Buchignani, 17, is going to the University of San Francisco on an accounting and general business scholarship, and Edward Aubert, 17, president of his class, was awarded the local Junior Achievement prize and also is going to USC.

But besides their plans for the future, these students wanted to talk about the school they were about to leave.

"A woman near me on the bus the other day," said Miss Angel, "turned to a friend as we approached the school and whispered in a loud voice that she always was scared when she was near Mission High."

Kafka, a football star with five A's and a B on his last report, smiled a minute and then said, "People think students here go around packing pistols in their pants. Of course, that's foolish and gives us a bad reputation. What we have here is a cross section of races and religions, and it's been a good thing for us to get to know how to get along with different kinds of people."

### High Light of Novena Here Next Sunday

Servicemen, policemen and firemen will lead several thousand members of a score of Catholic organizations in a Solemn Eucharistic procession through downtown streets next Sunday afternoon.

The procession will high light a nine-day Novena to St. Anthony. It will start at 3 p. m. at St. Boniface Church, 133 Golden Gate avenue, and will wind around several blocks near the church.

The Novena will open Wednesday morning in many of the city's Catholic Churches and will conclude on St. Anthony's feast day, June 13. The Reverend Zacheus Maher will speak at most of the services.

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Adenauer Visit BONN, Germany, May 31 (UP)—Chancellor Konrad Adenauer has postponed his planned visit to the United States until after the presidential inauguration next January, German sources said today.

### Auction Sales

### PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT Stock of the Connoisseur

one of San Francisco's Finest Antique Shops Auctions on the premises 570 Sutter Street Monday and Tuesday June 9th and 10th

Exhibitions Saturday and Sunday June 7th and 8th Fred R. Butterfield Auctioneer.

### POST AUCTION STUDIO

1284 GOLDEN GATE—WA 1-1757 COMPLETE FURNISHINGS, ANTIQUE and MODERN, ORNAMENTS of LOCAL ESTATE TOGETHER WITH MANY OTHER FURNISHINGS OF MANY HOMES AND APARTMENTS

### AUCTION WEDNESDAY JUNE 4, 11 A. M.

8-pc. old walnut dining set, bedroom set, tables, chairs, lockers, pedestals, Etagere, statues, ornaments, clocks, antique screens, chest, dining table, desks, fine selection of modern furnishings, bedroom, dining and living room sets; all sorts of occasional furniture, late-model electric refrigerator and table-top stove, electric Silver serving machine and others, piano, desks for home and office, bookshelves, ornaments, beddings, daises, bric a brac, radios, floor and table lamps, linens, luggage, rug and medium grade furniture of every description.

### GEARY ST. AUCTION

1274 Geary St. WE 1-2949 Auction Tuesday 11 A. M. A variety of home furnishings from local residences is offered. Included are chrome top stoves; modern elec. refrigerators and appliances; chrome linens; dining room sets; dining room sets; 16-inch Emerson TV set; radio; living room sets; commodes, chairs, tables, lamps, mirrors, picture sculpture and Oriental runners; room-size rug; twin and double bedroom sets; French bed; box springs; mattresses; linens; bric a brac; incidentals. Preview Monday, 1-5 p. m. P. Jensen Bakke, Auctioneer.

### UNLIMITED BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY \$2085.00 to \$6950.00 CASH REQUIRED (SECURED BY INVENTORY)

Wanted, a financially responsible man or woman to supervise a business of NEW AUTOMATIC COFFEE VENDORS, in San Francisco and surrounding territory. Drop in a coin and out comes a steaming hot cup of coffee, sugar and cream if desired. Each cup made individually. Installed in large business establishments, manufacturing plants, etc. Earning power unlimited. Can be operated in your spare time. Probable earnings to start from \$20.00 to \$50.00 per day. Three to five times more, depending on number of units you are capable of handling. All locations secured for you. If you can follow instructions and supervision of a large national company with Dun & Bradstreet rating, you should become financially independent within a very short time. PLEASE DO NOT ANSWER THIS ADVERTISEMENT UNLESS YOU HAVE THE REQUIRED AMOUNT OF CASH AVAILABLE AND ARE A PERSON WHO CAN MAKE AND GIVE A DEFINITE DECISION AFTER YOU KNOW THE FACTS!! WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PEOPLE WHO CAN START IMMEDIATELY. WRITE FULLY ABOUT YOURSELF, INCLUDE PHONE NUMBER, TO CHRONICLE BOX DA 5195.

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