

## In Memoriam



**SAMUEL T. BLACK**  
Former President of Normal School

This year has been made memorable in the history of the San Diego State Normal School by the death, in San Diego, March 23, of the founder of the school and its first president, Samuel Thorburn Black, who, though he had resigned the presidency in 1910, had retained a warm and active interest in the school and was an honored figure at all its important functions.

Very appropriately, indeed, the May Day celebration, which Mr. Black had made the most notable annual event in the life of the school, took the form this year of a memorial program. Dr. W. W. Kemp, of the University of California, formerly a member of the normal school faculty, delivered the address of the day. Another important feature was the reading, by President M. L. Ward, of the Board of Trustees, of the memorial and resolutions adopted by the board. This memorial has its personal interest for the alumni and faculty members who knew and loved Mr. Black, and also contains much that is of historical interest to all who are connected with the San Diego State Normal School. It is as follows:

Samuel T. Black was born in the confines of the lake district in the north of England, May 20, 1846, a few weeks after his parents arrived there from Scotland. His father was a native of Glasgow and his ancestors were of the famous McLennan clan, inhabiting the west coast of Scotland. His mother, whose maiden name was Elapeth Thorburn, was born in the County of Dumfries, in the southern part of Scotland. The son was educated in a private school located near his home, the headmaster being Thos. Russell Black, a graduate of Glasgow University, and in his day one of the best known educators in the north of England. Samuel T. Black attended that school for twelve years, or between the age of six and eighteen, the last five years were devoted to the study of the theory of practice of teaching in preparation for his life work. Two years were then spent in the office of his uncle, William Thorburn, an extensive manufacturer of pig-iron, under whom he gained the practical business education which stood him in good stead in his public career in California. His mother's brother, John Thorburn, had been lured to California in 1849 by the stories of gold discoveries and opportunities for the acquirement of wealth. For a number of years the family were kept posted as to his whereabouts, but in 1867, eleven years had elapsed with no word from him. His sister, Mrs. Elapeth Black, had long mourned over the uncertainty of her brother's fate. His last post-office address was Mineral Point, Wis., and Samuel T. Black of this review was sent out by his mother to learn what he could concerning his uncle. Accordingly, in 1867 he crossed the Atlantic, going direct to Mineral Point, where he found his uncle. Uncle and nephew became great chums and the latter was soon enamored of the life of the west and said: "This is the country for me." He took the teachers' examination, obtained a certificate and taught school during the winter, but his uncle's stories of California had created in him a longing for the Golden State and the following spring, in company with nine others from Mineral Point,

he started for California by way of the Panama Route, arriving in San Francisco on the 18th of April, 1868. He proceeded to Yuba county, where he obtained a teacher's certificate and taught for one term in a rural school at Indian Ranch. His next school was at Camptonville, a mining town, where he taught seventy-five pupils of all ages and sizes, ranging from the primer class to young men preparing for the university. From Camptonville he removed to Chico, Butte county, in 1873 and served as principal of the public schools there, resigning to accept the superintendency of the county schools, to which position, although he was a pronounced republican, he was appointed by a democratic board of county supervisors.

On completing his term, Mr. Black removed to Susanville, the county seat of Lassen county, and acted as principal of the public schools there for two years. The next three years were spent as principal of the Hollister public schools in San Benito county, and from 1881 to 1886 he was principal in two of the large grammar schools of Oakland. In the meantime, while in Susanville and Hollister, he had studied law and had been admitted to the bar by the supreme court of the state. In order to become familiar with the practice of law he resigned the principalship of the Durant Grammar School to accept the position of chief deputy in the county clerk's office.

On account of the delicate condition of his wife's health he removed to Ventura, in the southern part of the state, and while there organized the first high school between Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, acting as its principal for three years. In 1890 he was elected county superintendent of schools. Practically his first vacation in a long educational career occurred in 1903, in which year, accompanied by his little daughter, he spent several months in England, Scotland, and Ireland, visiting relatives from whom he had been separated for thirty-four years. During this visit he made careful study of the British system of schools, particularly institutions for the training of teachers. He was a member of the National Education Association from 1895 to the date of his death, and for one year served as its vice-president. He was also a member of the various teachers' associations of the state and had long figured prominently in educational circles.

Mr. Black was made a Mason in

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## SAMUEL T. BLACK

(Continued from Page 11)

Campdenville in 1872 and later became a member of the council, the Royal Arch Chapter, the Knights Templar Commandery, and of Al Malakiah Temple, A. A. O. N. M. S., of Los Angeles, and also attained the thirty-second degree of the Scottish Rite. He was connected with the National Guard of the state as a private for many years, afterwards becoming corporal at Campdenville, second lieutenant at Chico, captain at Ventura, and later was chosen major of the third battalion of the seventh regiment of the National Guard of California. Coming of Scottish parentage, he was, of course, reared in the Presbyterian faith, but outgrew to some extent the dogmas and rigidity of the old organization, at the same time retaining his veneration for the "aid kirk" and its many achievements in the history and development of human welfare.

While living in Campdenville, Mr. Black married Miss Jennie CRAIG, a native of Ohio, who was a pupil in the first school he taught in California. She died three years later in Chico, leaving a baby boy only fourteen months old. This son, David Thorburn Black, is now in business in San Francisco. In 1887 Mr. Black was united in marriage with Miss Pauline Pelham, who was born and reared in California. Two years later she died at Nordhoff, Ventura county, leaving a ten months' old daughter, Pauline Thorburn Black, who is now teaching in the normal school at San Diego. Mr. Black made a second visit to Europe in 1908 for the purpose of studying European systems of education. In August, 1910, he and his daughter Pauline took a trip around the world, covering a year.

In 1894 Mr. Black was elected superintendent of Public Instruction of the state of California, and took office in January, 1895. The new governor (Governor Budd) was a democrat and Mr. Black had been elected as a nominee of the republican state convention. Governor Budd soon discovered that Mr. Black's conception of his duties was state wide and professional, rather than local and political, and imposed great confidence in him, taking Mr. Black's judgment and advice in all educational legislation.

In 1897 the legislature created a new normal school, to be known as the State Normal School of San Diego. At that time normal school presidencies were filled by the joint board of normal school trustees. At a meeting of this board, held September 14, 1898, in Sacramento, Mr. Black was appointed president of the new normal school.

The school was opened November 1, 1898, in the Hill block, southwest corner of Sixth and F streets. The central portion of the present main building was dedicated May 1, 1899, and the school was transferred to it in the following September. In making a report to the board of trustees later, Mr. Black said: "No normal has had so suspicious an opening."

Mr. Black remained in the presidency until his resignation, which took effect September 1, 1910, concluding a term of service of twelve years. His administration was marked by the highest professional standards, with entire absence of all educational sensationalism. Mr. Black's course could best be described as always safe and sane, yet progressive. He developed a spirit of harmony in the faculty which continued until this day, and which marks the institution as unique in this regard. There were no upsets or stormy times or crisis in the history of the normal school under Mr. Black. Instead, there was a steady, strong development, with the utmost good will prevailing among the

trustees, faculty and student body.

Mr. Black was much beloved by the student body. At the annual gatherings of the graduates it was always evident that the greetings given Mr. Black were inspired by a genuine and lasting regard for him.

In the world of men Mr. Black was as highly regarded as in the school world. Among university presidents and university administrators and instructors he was highly valued by such men as Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University; Wheeler, of the University of Washington; Snodden, former Commissioner of Education for the state of Massachusetts, and Barrows, now Dean of the Faculties of the University of California, both of them Ventura county boys, who owed much of their early success to Mr. Black's encouragement, speak of Mr. Black always with great respect and affection. The normal school presidents who have known him longest—Dalley, of San Jose, and Millspaugh, of Los Angeles—pay their tributes to Mr. Black's integrity and ability. One of Mr. Black's warmest friends was Mr. Alfred Moseley, the distinguished English financier and the patron of the Moseley commission for the advancement of education.

In April, 1913, Mr. Black was elected a member of the board of education of the city of San Diego and held that position until March 1, 1916, when he resigned as a member of such board. He died at San Diego, Cal., March 23, 1917.

Mr. Black was a man of sterling character. As an educator he stood high among the best.

He had great affection for the land of his birth and was a stalwart, loyal citizen of the nation of his adoption.

He was honest in his convictions and in his dealings with men.

He was controlled by his sense of right and was unwavering in his devotion to his duty as he conceived it.

He was courageous in the defense of what he believed to be right and in combatting what he believed to be wrong.

In his character there was a most happy blending of great strength and tenderness.

He was universally respected, admired by all who knew him, and greatly beloved.

By reason of the long continued and most cordial official relations existing between the San Diego State Normal School and Mr. Black and the personal friendship existing between him and the members of the Board of Trustees of this institution, it is deemed fitting and appropriate that we, as such trustees, sign and have engrossed among the permanent records of this school this memorial, and that a copy thereof be delivered by Mr. E. L. Hardy, president of the school, to Mr. Black's daughter, Pauline, and it is therefore so ordered.

Signed by the members of the Board of Trustees.

## THE FIFTH GRADE MAKES A PLAYHOUSE

Have you seen the playhouse which the children of the 5th grade have built? They were asked what they'd like to do along that line, and they expressed the wish to build a play house big enough for them to get into. So they drew their plans and secured second-hand lumber from the Exposition. Every bit of the work, such as carpentering, painting, etc., was done by the children themselves. The language, arithmetic, drawing and manual training work were all correlated to fit in with their play house work. They are now working on the furnishings for the house, the girls making rugs, mats, etc., and the boys the furniture. They are thoroughly enjoying every bit of the work and at the same time are gaining experience along very practical lines.

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