

Caroline Loring Hunt

(Miss C.L. Hunt)

1840-1922

SHE BELIEVED SHE COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE

One of only three unmarried OAC Founders and in 1902 one of the oldest, Caroline Loring Hunt was born in 1840 in Salem Mass. The Hunt family came to California at some point in the late 1850s, first to Sacramento then to San Francisco. Before moving west though, Caroline attended the Massachusetts State Normal School. After graduation she entered an advanced class, designed to prepare students for high school teaching. She began her career in San Francisco, first teaching primary grades at Hayes Valley Grammar School. However, soon afterwards she became the teacher of Biology and Zoology at the newly opened San Francisco's Girls' High School where she continued to teach until her retirement in 1911 at age 71, having taught school for over 50 years.

The very same month and year of the founding of the OAC, August 1902, The San Francisco Chronicle published a piece headlined *Oldest Teachers in San Francisco's Public Schools*. It listed a Miss Caroline L. Hunt, at age 62, was then the second oldest teacher in the San Francisco public schools, having taught a total of 512 months for a monthly salary of \$140! The 1877 photo below shows a 37 year old Carrie with her students and the school's principal, John Swett.



Carrie Hunt's teacher-heart is still in evidence over a century later. We hear her voice in the introduction she wrote for a book she compiled in 1891, *Wisdom of the Wise, Pithy and Pointed Sayings of the Best Authors*, which for years was circulated in UC Berkeley's library and is still available on Amazon: "For many years ... I have been constantly on the alert to find the best way of impressing upon the hearts and minds of my pupils the great principles of right and truth and justice that lie at the foundation of all good character." One bit of pedagogy she employed was the liberal and sometimes subtle use of quotations, "placing before the pupils each day a quotation which should contain some truth that I desired to impress, some hint in regard to a neglected duty, some gentle reproof for faults committed, or some word of encouragement to new effort." Clearly Miss Hunt's young female students were more important to her than the science content of biology and zoology. "Selecting for my purpose the noblest thoughts, clothed in the beautiful language of our best authors, I find that the lesson arouses none of the feeling of antagonism that a reproof otherwise administered might occasion; and the responsive glance from a pair of bright eyes has many a time told me of the success of my effort when no word has been spoken. That the seed thus sown bears fruit, I know from letters received from former pupils, who have taken occasion to express their thanks for the benefit they felt they had received."

We do not know why, at the age of 62 and still in the midst of a rewarding and successful career (and being headlined as the second-oldest public school teacher in San Francisco), did Caroline Loring Hunt, who in the 1900 and 1910 federal censuses is listed as living in San Francisco, cross the Bay and commit to being an active member of the women's club Laura Lyon White was helping to organize in Mill Valley. However, we do know that one year after the 1890 auction, Caroline and her sister, Sarah, bought the property that is now 114 & 118 Cornelia Avenue so we can presume she spent many summers here, which also means that Founders Agnes Cappleman, Alice Folker and Louise Coffin were nearby neighbors. Thus, Carrie would be aware of the issues that were motivating 35 women to seek Laura White's help in organizing.

But, perhaps more pertinently, we know a lot about Carrie Hunt's character. A February 1898 San Francisco Chronicle article, headlined "*Teachers Are Not Pleased*," described a committee of three who had engaged an attorney to discover why monies supposed to be in a teachers' annuity fund was being withheld by its auditor. Miss Caroline L. Hunt of the Girls' High School was one of the three on that committee. In 1901, another San Francisco Chronicle article described a meeting of the Teachers' Mutual Aid Society where they voted to provide for an increase in the amount of sick benefits payable to a member in case of sickness. Caroline L. Hunt is recorded as the teacher who introduced that successful amendment to the organization's bylaws. There is also Mill Valley evidence of Carrie's concern for others. Spitz's Mill Valley book states that the cottages on Cornelia "*were known as the YMCA Cottages when, starting in 1910, the YMCA began bringing young San Francisco girls to them for a taste of 'the country.'*" A history of the San Francisco School District states that in 1911, "*... the Kate Kennedy School Women's Club was organized to further female teachers' rights including salary equity.*" On the basis of the evidence of her previous activism, we can presume Miss Carolina Loring Hunt was a member of that women's club as well as a YMCA (soon to be known as YWCA) advocate for women. So, we believe it is not wishful thinking to assume that on August 2, 1902 Caroline Loring Hunt stepped forward to sign the membership roll for the newly organized Outdoor Art Club because she believed that, despite being older and very busy, she could make a difference.

In the next installment of the OAC Serial, "**The 35 Ladies Project**",
read about perhaps our most consequential Founder.