

Published April 14th, 2021

## What's in a name?

By Vera Kochan



Photos Vera Kochan

Cerros (meaning "little hills"), because of the rolling hills and valley. The campus stands on what was once a lake - Laguna de los Colorados - part of a Spanish land grant.

At the time of Campo's naming a few disgruntled citizens wrote to the local newspapers of the day complaining about the improper use of Spanish. "They're murdering the Spanish, again," claimed Spanish teacher Helen Ford, who was already upset by the incorrect usage of names given to the local streets.

Ford went so far as to contact the Acalanes Union High School District with her complaint. "May I point out that this name cannot be used, because it is incorrect Spanish. It can be 'Campo' 'Lindo', two words. If we are to use foreign names, I believe that the words used should be correct and correctly pronounced."

Another citizen reasoned that since the school was located in the middle of what used to be a lake bed, it should be named "Laguna." Insisting that the first year of students should have the honor of naming their school, the assumption was that they would rather cheer "Laguna, Laguna" as opposed to "Campolindo, Campolindo, rah, rah, rah!"

Winchester, besides wanting to call the school Los Cerros, lobbied for black and gold as the official colors. The students overruled him and Campolindo's school colors remain blue and red with the Cougar as the mascot.

Lafayette's Acalanes High School opened in 1940. The name was derived from The "Ahala-n" a Costanoan native village (part of the greater Ohlone tribe) in the area. The Spanish had called the village "Akalan."

The principal-elect at the time, Stanley Warburton, received a letter from A.L. Kroeber, PhD, a professor of anthropology at UC Berkeley, stating, "Use of the name Acalanes by the high school cheering section is within the realm of plausibility, but cheering for Laguna de los Palos Colorados would appear to offer some difficulty in enunciation."

The campus was built on land that was once a field of tomatoes and weeds. School officials wanted the mascot to be an American Eagle, which was a revered bird to the Costanoans, but the student body intervened and selected the Don (a Spanish honorary title) along with school colors of royal blue and white.

Orinda's Miramonte High School greeted its first students in 1955. Much like Campolindo, it was not named after an individual. After this reporter's extensive research and inquiries to locals and various organizations, no documentation was uncovered as to the naming of the campus. Once again, in breaking down the name into two Spanish words, "mira" means "sight" and "monte" means "hill or mountain."

A paper dated July 1954 stated, "The school was named Miramonte, much to the disgust of a Mr. Maccarro who suggested the name be changed to Orinda High School."

Mahler's notes quoted an observer as saying, "At Miramonte in 1955, one looked over his surroundings and saw no houses at all - it was a beautiful setting. Each morning the fog gradually burned away, just as it does now, exposing the green, rolling hills of Moraga."

The school's current principal Julie Parks said, "I can't speak to the direct impetus for the name change, but I think we can all agree that the name Miramonte is appropriate! We are indeed surrounded by mountain views!"

What's in a name? The phrase comes from Shakespeare's play, "Romeo and Juliet" - "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." A name is an arbitrary label, but when it comes to Campolindo, Acalanes and Miramonte high schools, almost no one to this day is aware of how they received their names. At the founding of each campus there was enough disagreement on settling for a name which apparently, for some, did not "smell as sweet."

Moraga's Campolindo High School opened its doors in 1962. Campolindo was not named after a person. To break down the name into two words, the Spanish translation of "campo" means "countryside or field," while the translation of "lindo" means "pretty". According to historian Margaret Mahler, Campolindo's first principal, Alex Winchester, wanted to call the school Los

Built on a site that was once black walnut fields, the Student Commission chose the school's colors of green and white. The student body chose the Matador as the mascot, although there was a tongue-in-cheek suggestion for a change. The football team's first field was a bulldozed meadow. There was a horrendous infestation of gophers digging up the dirt. Luckily the problem was eradicated or the sign on Moraga Way might now read: Miramonte High School, Home of the Gophers.

Special thanks to: Moraga Historical Society President Susan Sperry (Moragahistory.org), Orinda Historical Society President Alison Burns (Orindahistory.org) and Michael Beller General Community Library Manager (Orinda).



Photos Vera Kochan



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