

The Chemawa American

Printed at Chemawa, Oregon, and Devoted to the Interests of Indian Education

Vol. XXV

Wednesday, November 1, 1922

No. 3

A LITTLE-KNOWN OREGON SCHOOL

Under the above caption the following article appeared in the September issue of the Oregon Teachers' Magazine and was followed in the October number by a larger and more detailed discussion of our school, its aims and accomplishments:

The state of Oregon has, near her capital city, one of the few successful vocational schools for sub-college students in the United States. Not many Oregon citizens know that there is such a school and some residents of Salem have not yet heard of it. It is neither a public nor a church school and neither love nor money is the price of admission. It is in no way either a penal or a corrective institution, but is in every way a modern educational establishment.

Pupils enter the first grade and complete the tenth grade in this school. They may then present their credits at the Salem high school, enter the eleventh grade there and graduate the following year.

The academic standing is not the unusual thing, however. In addition to the credits admitting to the high school, these boys and girls have acquired a practical earning knowledge of some good trade.

A second unusual thing is the fact that these children have spent but one-half of each day in the schoolroom from the first year through the tenth. They actually complete the ten years in one-half the time required by the public schools.

These children are not over-driven. They have a full share of extra-curricular activities. Orchestra, band, choruses, literary contests, dramatics, military drill, athletics and parties are all theirs in large measure.

The accomplishment seems almost unbelievable. It has been suggested that this success may be due to a systematic concentration. This may be a good general explanation, but whatever the cause, the pupils at the Salem Indian School have been doing just this thing for several years.

Perhaps the reason that these facts are known to so few is that, unlike other schools of the state, this one does not advertise in any way. It has no reason to solicit attention. Pupils, teachers and supplies all come through appropriation by the central government and the people feel that it is remote.

The institution and its system of education is modern, up-to-date, even ahead-of-date, in its solution of the problems of vocational education. Its carefully developed course of study and daily plans is the result of forty-two years of experimental work, for the Salem Indian School at Chemawa, Oregon, is the oldest non-reservation school in the United States Indian Service.

SUPERVISOR COON IN CHAPEL

Mr. Coon, supervisor of our district, gave a brief but most interesting talk to the student body at assembly on Wednesday morning. "Not all of my work is devoted to the education of the pupils in the Indian schools," said Mr. Coon. "Last year the government paid tuition in the three states, Washington, Oregon and California, for 1,000 Indian pupils. So, you see that more than half the Indian children in three states are in public schools."

Mr. Coon told also of how, in one instance, the Federation of Women's Clubs succeeded, through a Women's Club in an Indian village of California, in getting a school for the ten or twelve children of the little village.

As a final message the speaker gave his experience in noticing the letters, "A,B,C," on the cement sidewalks in a small town in Washington. As the letters occurred so often he supposed they must be the initials of the cement contractor. He was told later that those letters were placed there at the request of the Women's Club, that they meant "Always Be Careful," and were intended to remind the boys and girls of their city to be careful in crossing streets.

"So," said Mr. Coon, "I want to leave with you boys and girls this message which I found in that little Washington town: "A, B, C," "Always Be Careful."

Anybody who has not been at Chemawa for six months or longer would be surprised were they to return to our school now. The new power house and equipment are now ready for service, there are new concrete laterals all over the place to carry steam pipes, and in many places these are covered with concrete, thus forming walks of splendid character. In other places where the laterals are not covered with concrete for walks they have been deftly covered up and grass is now growing over them. Great is the work of man and the hand of time.