

# LaGrande Evening Observer

(Incorporated)  
An Independent Newspaper

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OFFICIAL PAPER OF UNION COUNTY AND THE CITY OF LA GRANDE

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GIVE GLORY TO GOD—"Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength." 1 Chron. 16:28.

### PREJUDICE VS. FACT

The Pendleton East Oregonian refuses to be nice about the normal school location. Yesterday it appeared again with an editorial calling the Board of Normal School Regents, in effect, "train robbers." It insists that there was no other possible location for the normal except at Pendleton, that a great injustice is being done the future students of the institution, that the purpose of service to the people of this area is defeated by the selection of La Grande.

It's too bad that the subject has been raised at all, worse still that the Pendleton paper insists on continuing it. How much easier it would have been, how much more productive of good will toward that city, if it had said (as have the other papers concerned), "You licked us. Congratulations. Since we couldn't have it, we are glad you are the fortunate city. We're for you—good luck!"

But since the East Oregonian refuses to do that and persists in misrepresentations regarding the voting and the merits of each city, just to keep history straight and supplant prejudice with fact The Observer feels that it should review the situation. The last editorial from the East Oregonian is printed elsewhere on this page together with the congratulatory one from The Dalles Chronicle.

In the first place we wish to refer to the question of population to be served by a normal school located here or in Pendleton. The E.-O. repeats over and over again that its city is the center and that there is "and always will be" 50 per cent more population west of the Blue mountains than east. Possibly true. But the Blue mountains do not constitute the dividing line in Eastern Oregon, nor do they raise an insurmountable barrier to La Grande for the area to the west. There is no disputing the fact that the twelve counties referred to contain more people than the remaining counties this side of the Cascades. Ten of these counties are nearer Pendleton, eight nearer La Grande. And we are quick to admit that it does cost money to ride on the railroad or drive a car across the mountains between this city and our nearest western neighbor.

But what has all that got to do with the price of eggs? The location of the Eastern Oregon normal school was based on a consideration of what students from the area east of the Cascades would actually do in selecting a school, not what they should do, not what Pendleton would like to have them do. Take a map of Oregon for a minute. Over in the Willamette valley near Salem is a normal at Monmouth, a university at Eugene, an agricultural college at Corvallis, and down in the southern part of the state a normal school at Ashland. There is now a railroad across the Cascades to Eugene, soon to be connected up at Bend, also an excellent state highway, and there is a fine highway from Lake and Klamath counties across to Medford and Ashland.

What would naturally happen to students originating from Klamath and Lake counties, from Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, Wasco, and Hood River counties? Would they seek the easiest, closest, and most attractive way and go to Monmouth or Ashland, or Eugene or Corvallis? Or would they choose the more difficult, the more distant (in most instances), and the least attractive and decide on a La Grande or Pendleton normal?

The answer is obvious because the territory to be served by the Eastern Oregon normal is obvious. Pendleton could not have hoped to draw from more than five counties west of the Blue mountains. In that area, according to the 1920 census, there are 42,140 people. In the six counties east of the Blue Mountains from which La Grande cannot help but attract students the population is 54,730. Center of population? What population?

Another point deserving of attention for history's sake: When the voting was in process, Mr. Starr moved that The Dalles be selected (as the editorial from the Chronicle records), and was supported in that choice by Mr. Bryant of Moro and Mr. Fuller of Ashland. But the remaining six regents voted adversely and The Dalles was eliminated. Does the East Oregonian charge that the vote of these three men thus expressed was "fixed," unfairly prejudiced, because they preferred The Dalles to Pendleton? Does it condemn Mr. Fuller for taking La Grande as a second choice and praise Mr. Bryant and Mr. Starr for turning to Pendleton after The Dalles had been eliminated? What foolishness!

To say the least, the silly charges of the East Oregonian are most unbecoming for the press of a defeated city. As we said yesterday, we are confident it does not express the sentiment of the people of that fine community. And we hope the members of the Board of Regents—serving the educational interests of the entire state of Oregon to the best of their excellent ability—will overlook this thoughtless step and these careless remarks on the part of an otherwise worthy and esteemed contemporary.

### TRAIN ROBBING MORRIS HONORABLE

There is no animosity between Pendleton and La Grande over the normal school subject nor should there be any. La Grande is a good town inhabited by good people and no one has made any contentions to the contrary.

But the problem of locating a normal school for eastern Oregon is a matter that should be handled independently of the interests of any community. The normal school regents are under oath to serve the students who come under their jurisdiction. It is a very high obligation and a man who is not ready to comply with his obligations, regardless of personal interests, is not fit to be a member of any board of regents. That goes and the subject is not debatable any more than is bank robbing debatable.

The East Oregonian is indignant about the normal school decision, not because La Grande was chosen, but because this paper is convinced beyond any doubt that the decision was brought about by improper methods. On the face of it there was something wrong. Advance stories that the thing was all fixed and would be carried out, merit or no merit, have been confirmed in detail. The finger of suspicion points plainly to the door of Governor Pierce and the suspicion is general in La Grande as well as elsewhere.

In plain English a swindle is contemplated against the future school girls of eastern Oregon and sportsmanship does not require that anyone keep silent when a plot of that sort is afoot. Most of the prospective normal school students of Eastern Oregon reside in the 12 counties west of the Blue mountains. The heavy population is there and it always will be found in that part of the district. If these girls are forced to go to La Grande for normal training they will be subjected each year to a minimum unnecessary expense of \$21.44 for their train fare alone, if they eat while travelling or pay

Pullman charges their expenses will be still further increased. It is the literal truth, which no one has denied nor can deny, that the location of the school in La Grande places upon students from the major part of the district an extra expense burden equal to the cost of living for a month at a dormitory. Such a load if imposed will compel many a good student to go home before her normal training has been completed. To a student who is self supporting, or partly so, a \$16 bill often seems as big as a house. Every year in Oregon hundreds of students are forced out of our higher institutions of learning by inability to meet a month's board bill.

When they voted at Salem Monday five of the normal school regents, led by Governor Pierce, overlooked the one phase of their duty that should have counted with them above all other considerations whatsoever. If that sort of stuff is to be tolerated and continued by people in high places in Oregon it will be proper for our people to repeal the law against train robbing.—Pendleton East Oregonian.

### CONGRATULATIONS, LA GRANDE

The Dalles extends the heartiest of congratulations to La Grande, the victor in the friendly rivalry for the new Eastern Oregon normal school.

Of course The Dalles would have felt better if the normal school had been located here. To say otherwise would be hypocrisy. But so would Hood River, Bend, Pendleton, Arlington, Westport and many others, have preferred that they be designated. There were bound to be disappointments, for there could only be one winner.

No applicant for the normal can charge unfairly. Each city presented its claims and qualifications to the best of its ability. No attempts were made to belittle advantages of other sections. No animosities were aroused; no inter-



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city hatreds created to breed ill feeling in years to come. The Dalles quite naturally feels that the interest of the state at large would have been better served by a school here, that would have relieved congestion at Monmouth. That was our principal stand, and the one that brought us to the front as a strong contender. But the regents held that it was the intent of the people to establish a normal school for the benefit of Eastern Oregon, and not for the state as a whole. Under this interpretation without doubt either Pendleton or La Grande were the logical sites. As things now stand, still another normal school for Oregon, or an outlay of several hundred thousand dollars for enlargement of the Monmouth normal, is inevitable. No one contends that students from the Willamette valley will attend the La Grande normal so, in this respect, the situation at Monmouth will remain unchanged. No one can criticize Governor Pierce, Sam Kozier or other members of the board of regents for their course. Pierce voted for La Grande, his home town, and he would have been a poor citizen if he had not. Kozier advocates keeping all state buildings as near one center as possible and favored Pendleton. His vote was based on honest conviction. W. C. Bryant, of Moro, C. L. Starr of Portland, and J. H. Fuller, of Ashland, who voted for The Dalles, did so because they believed that a normal school in this city would serve both Eastern Oregon and the state as a whole. The thought persists, however, that Eastern Oregon should have had no say in the matter; that the quite natural element of hometown partisanship should have been eliminated. La Grande regents voted for La Grande; Pendleton regents for Pendleton and The Dalles partisans for The Dalles. To have let Willamette valley and southern Oregon regents settle the matter would have been more equitable. Or, another assumption may be advanced. Would it not have been better if the normal school bill had placed selection of the site in the hands of an impartial board, made up of the presidents of all normal schools, colleges and universities in the state? These anti-morten thoughts are in no way tinged with bitterness because The Dalles was not selected, and we hope they are not so interpreted. They would have been equally true were this city the winner. La Grande played the game fairly and squarely, and the regents voted in the same way. Were the situations reversed, and The

Dalles represented by two regents, as was La Grande, we should have expected them to vote for this city as the school site. The Dalles made a good fight, and won the respect of the regents and the state at large by the manner in which this city's claims were presented. We were defeated, but not ignobly. And is not the ability to accept defeat with a smile, just as worthy while in this world as graciousness in victory?—The Dalles Chronicle.

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