

# School in Log House in '50

Used Eight Years Until it Was Replaced in 1858 by Central School; Bonham And Moores Persist in Records of Early Teachers; Old Building Still Stands

ABOUT 81 years ago there stood on the corner of Marion and Commercial streets a log house that was to be the forerunner of 12—and who knows how many more?—huge structures. The log house, erected in 1850, was Salem's first public school.

This structure was used for school purposes and about eight years before the Central school, usually considered the first school, was constructed. It had served as a school five years before William Pugh, county school superintendent, created Salem district No. 24.

Of the school teachers who wielded the traditional birch in the old log house, two names persist: B. F. Bonham and Mrs. I. R. Moores. In those days, the public school was supported by subscription and by rate-bills, in addition to the aid given by the common school fund.

It was in 1857 that the Central school, erected at the corner of North High and Marion streets, was ordered built, and the following year it was completed and that great day was at hand when youthful Salem could "larn" its readin', writin' and 'rithmetic in "a magnificent new building. The first Central building (moved when the high school was erected at Marion and High) is still in use—as the Steinbock junk shop.

## J. O'Donald Builder Of Central School

J. O'Donald was the contractor and builder of the Central school. Names of most of the teachers who taught the school from 1858 to 1866 are recorded as follows: Sylvester Pennoyer (who was to be elected governor in 1887) and Mrs. Pennoyer, Mr. and Mrs. O. J. Carr, A. C. Daniels, S. H. Jenner, Miss Emily Belt, Miss Nellie Stipp, Miss Clara Watt, E. Humphrey, Prof. Dana C. Pearson, Mrs. P. L. Price, Miss E. Boise and J. T. Outhouse.

When the school was opened in 1858, members of the board of directors were: A. W. Ferguson, W. H. Rector and C. A. Reed. B. F. Brown was school clerk.

Names associated with the enterprise of establishing the first public schools in Salem are J. D. Boon, E. N. Cooke, J. H. Moores, I. R. Moores and Dr. A. M. Belt. History says that in 1859 there were 227 boys and girls of school age residing in the district, but of what share of them were going to school there is no record. Six years later, 200 pupils were in school and the enumeration for the district totaled 632.

## 2 Schools Erected At Cost of \$4500

Eight years after the Central school was opened the school board voted, because of the growing town and crowded conditions in the school, construction of two new two-room school buildings. In 1866 these buildings, one in North Salem and one in South Salem were erected at a cost of \$4,500. This figure also included purchase of grounds.

Even with three school buildings, the taxpayer had no cause to grumble, for only in a few instances during the first 15 years of public school history was the taxpayer called upon to help make up deficiencies in repair and building. The three schools were virtually self-sustaining, and it was not even necessary to levy a local tax to pay teachers' salaries. A tuition of \$4 per term and monies received from the school fund were the main revenue.

The first Marion county teachers' institute seems to date back to August, 1867, for in April of that year the school board desig-

nated Rev. O. Dickinson to represent the Salem schools at that meeting, to be held at Belle Passi.

## Little Central School Used First for Negroes

Rapid increases in population prompted the district to purchase sites and built the two schools known as the Little Central and the East Salem school in the three-year period from 1866 to 1869. The Little Central school, present-day Salem may be surprised to know, was used first for a public school for col-

And school taxes were launched, and with them the free school system was an actuality. Directors in '71 were R. H. Dearborn, R. Mallory, Paul Crandall and C. P. Stratton, clerk. Opposition to a school tax continued strong for about five years.

In 1875, the grades system of instruction was adopted by the board, with the following teachers selected to introduce the graded system: J. T. Gregg, Clara Watt and Zilpha Raymond, East building; Mrs. L. G. Adair and Mrs. Nellie Curl, Central school; Marie E. Smith, primary Central school; H. G. Morris and Ida Hutton at the North school; A. W. Lockhart and Mary J. Jory at the South school. J. T. Gregg was city superintendent.

Another big step in history of Salem schools was taken in 1883 when, because two churches had

In the last 50 years city superintendents have been: J. T. Gregg, George A. Peebles, S. A. Randall, Mrs. Sarella Grubb Miller (the only woman to hold that position here), again Mr. Peebles, D. W. Yoder, L. R. Traver, J. N. Powers, who was here from 1905 to 1912 (next to the longest period), P. J. Kuntz, O. M. Elliott, J. W. Todd and the present head, George W. Hug, who has been here 11 years, the longest record.

## 4TH SECTION LONG CONTEST

Intermediate Cities Were Subject to High Costs In Days of 1887

Probably no section of the interstate commerce commission act has been more hotly contested than the "Fourth Section" which relates to the rates for long and short

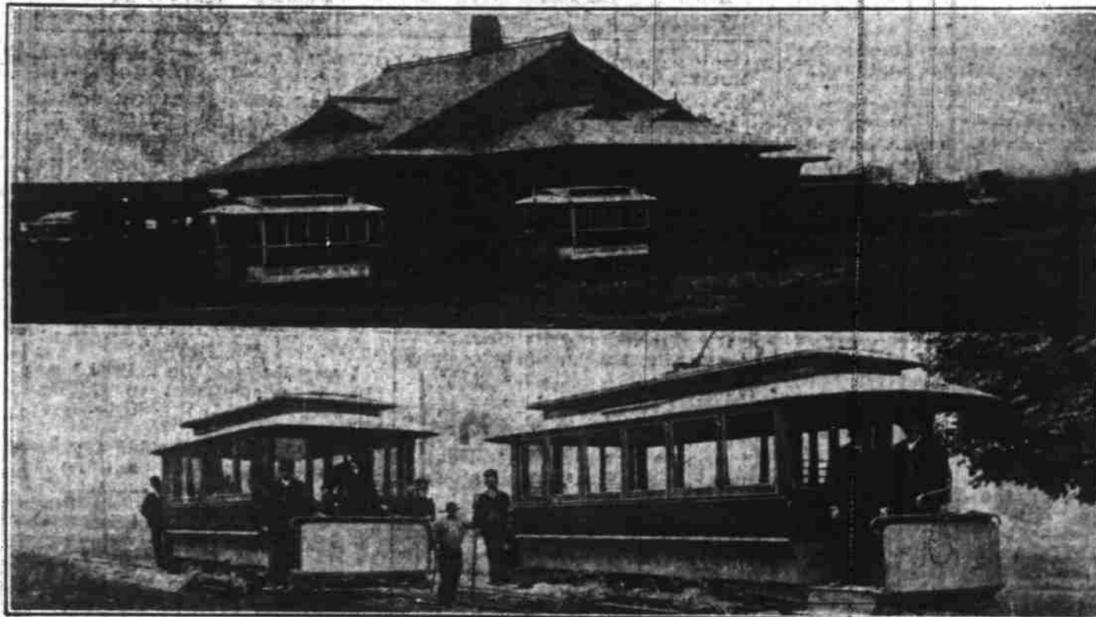
## EDITOR HAPPY AS RAILS COME

Espee Purchase of Line to Be Great Asset to State in View

When the Southern Pacific announced its intention to acquire the O. & C. railroad which had been built south from Portland through Salem to Eugene and Roseburg and Ashland, The Statesman commented as follows:

"This announcement is of very great importance to Oregon although it has been known that negotiations were pending for the transfer of this system to the California company for a good many months, yet this is the first time the fact has been reliably established by a statement from headquarters of either company. This change means a great deal to Oregon and especially to the western and southern portions of the state. It liberates the Willamette valley in a measure from the extortions practiced by the Oregon Railway and Navigation company, and will also place the road that connects the northern with the southern parts of the state in the hands of a company full of enterprise and a 'go-ahead' spirit. It means that after July first our mails will not lie over in Ashland and Portland one day out of every seven; it means that our merchants will have not only Portland but San Francisco as an available and quick purchasing market; it means an extended market for our produce; it means another and pleasant passenger route to the east... This when completed will be one of the best paying roads on the Pacific coast, and its completion will contribute a great deal of benefit to Western Oregon, by bringing us much of the immigration that comes now only to California, and returns to the east from there."

## SALEM'S FIRST STREET CARS



UPPER: FIRST STREET CARS IN SALEM, 1889, AT SOUTHERN PACIFIC DEPOT. IN THE LEFT BACKGROUND MAY BE SEEN ONE OF THE OLD HORSE-DRAWN BUSES. LOWER: FIRST ELECTRIC CARS, 1890.

ored children, with Mrs. R. Mallory as teacher, a post which she held as long as the school was maintained.

Other teachers whose names are associated with the history of the public schools until the close of 1869 are: Prof. T. H. Crawford, W. T. Ramsey, F. H. Grubbs, J. M. Garrison, O. D. Doane, H. Y. Thompson, R. O. Dunbar, Mrs. E. Denlinger, Mrs. P. L. Price, Miss E. A. Witten, Miss Aurora Watt, Miss Fannie Case, Miss McGhee, Miss Louise Simpson and Miss Clara Watt. This list is not complete.

In 1869, there were 1,136 children of school age, of whom 327 are recorded as being in school.

## 3-Mill tax put On by Close Squeeze

The second big and important step in the history of Salem schools was instituted in 1871—and the storm it arose was greater than height of the excitement at the recent legislative session. For horrors, the school board was upsetting the established order of things by proposing to inflict upon the people of Salem for school purposes a 2½ mill tax, the former system proving inadequate for the increasing demands. At the annual meeting on April 3 the vote for the tax was 51, and against, 39. But an illegality was found by the opponents. Another vote on April 24 passed a three mill levy by a good margin, 112 to 74.

been called into use as schools, the annual meeting voted to build another schoolhouse, to cost \$40,000. A five mill building tax, as well as the regular three mill levy, was passed that year, when taxable property was set at \$1,321,738, and salaries of the 13 teachers were \$6395.

The result of this move was the East Salem school (the present Washington school and first of those now in use) boasted as one of the finest public school buildings on the Pacific coast and designed to accommodate 600 students, seated in 12 rooms. The building was not entirely completed until 1887.

From that time on, growth of the city and of trends in public education are more or less known, and suffice it but to touch upon the present system with its 12 strong schools and nearly 200 teachers. The North and South schools, later renamed the Washington and Lincoln schools, were constructed in 1890 and 1891 respectively; Park was built in 1890; next the senior high, Garfield in 1909, Englewood the next year, then Richmond and Highland in 1911, McKinley in 1915, and finally the Parrish junior high and in a short time Leslie junior high. Now there is talk of a 10-year building program which may include a new high school as well as additions to several old buildings.

hauls. The fight for low rates for long hauls on account of water competition has been waged for over 40 years, ever since the act was passed. Just recently Oregon cities from Ashland to Salem had a fight before the commission for lower rates. W. P. Ellis conducted the case.

But back in '87 just after the act went into effect, the eight principal banks of San Francisco wired to Washington that "all productive and monetary relations of this coast are threatened with disorder from the action of the interstate commerce commission bill. Action on your part can save this coast from the tremendous loss which is sure to follow the illiberal or narrow interpretation of the fourth section of the bill. We ask the suspension temporarily of the long haul clause, at least until our position can be placed before your honorable body."

"Temporarily" meant a long time—for the coast cities still fight for suspension of the "fourth section," which is most famous in all proceedings before the commission.

## AND ON TO FAME

E. B. Piper left yesterday for Seattle, to take his place on the reporter staff of the Post-Intelligencer. — Statesman, Nov. 1, 1888.

Piper served as city editor on the Statesman, and graduated from Willamette university. He was successor to Harvey Scott as editor of the Oregonian.

## Street Railroad Public Company With \$20,000 In

"A number of the business men of Salem met yesterday afternoon at the Capital National bank to discuss the question of the building of a system of street railways in this city. It was the general sentiment of those present that the time has arrived when street railway lines in Salem are a public necessity and that if economically built and well managed, such an enterprise would be a paying investment.

"A company to be named the Salem Street Railway company was authorized with capital stock of \$20,000." — Statesman, Nov. 1, 1888.

The incorporators were Wm. N. Ladue, John G. Wright, Wm. England, J. H. Albert, Chas. B. Moores, T. H. Hubbard, H. W. Cottle.

The first officers were R. J. Hendricks, president; T. H. Hubbard, vice president; C. B. Moores, secretary; J. H. Albert, treasurer. A rival company, the Capital City Street railway was organized in 1889 and began operations.

**FASHION NOTE OF '51**  
"The 'bloomers' in Oregon. A couple of our down-town ladies appeared in the Bloomer costume (short dress and trousers) one day last week. We were not 'there to see' but we understand the demonstration created an intense excitement in that quarter." — The Statesman, (Oregon City), Sept. 2, 1861.