

## .. Our Public Schools ..

The first schools of the village Wasco were those of the missionaries, and the private schools maintained by the soldiers, stationed in the village to defend the white settlers against the Indians. In the spring of 1854 the first school of the post, a small log building, was erected a little south-west of the place where the Academy Park school now stands. In the summer of '55, Chas. Meigs taught a private school in the same building, but he left the school in the fall to join a company of volunteers organized by Nathan Olney to fight the Indians.

One of the early schools was taught by Miss Sounce, a sister of Mrs. Put Bradford, and in later years the wife of Colonel Ebie. This school was taught in a private house on Fourth street between Court and Union. In November, 1859, the school district was organized, and this foundation of the public schools of The Dalles was strengthened by building a public school house, or better, a public school room, as the school house, which was erected on the site now occupied by Dr. Siddall's cottages on fourth and Laughlin street, had but one room; another was added a few years later, and in 1863 two more rooms were built, giving to the whole the form of a T. The desks of the first two rooms gave sad proof of the fact that young America is anxious to make his mark in the world; profiting by experience, the directors furnished one of the new rooms with desks two inches thick to give the boys sufficient material to whittle! In later years the part built in '63 was known as the little blue school house. In 1888 it was moved to Union street, and is now called the Union street annex.

Union street school was erected in 1873. It first stood in the street, just below the "cut," the main entrance being from the north. The grounds were ample, and boys and girls found room for out door games. Many flowers and beautiful mosses grew on the bluff near the building less than fifteen years ago, and great was the children's delight when they were allowed to decorate their desks with the mosses. The little blue school house was not used for a time; by 1880, however, the attendance of the schools had increased so that every room had to be used, and then not all of the pupils were accommodated. In the lower grades half day sessions were maintained, and a room in the Methodist church was rented to provide for a primary class. Such were the conditions when the citizens voted a tax to erect a brick building of four rooms. The building was completed in 1882, and is now occupied by the eighth grade and the high school pupils.

A building of two rooms was erected at Eleventh and Union streets in 1889. This building is now known as the East Hill Primary, and was moved to its present site in 1894. In the same year the Wasco Independent Academy, with all the property of the Academy Association, was purchased by the school district. Academy Park school has replaced the term the Wasco Independent Academy.

Today the school district owns ten acres of land, and five school buildings, the whole valued at \$53,000, and a high school building is now being built in the Academy Park grounds, at the cost of \$19,000. Little debt has been allowed to accumulate; the liabilities being \$7,000 in Feb., 1897. At that time the tax payers voted to bond the district for \$20,000 to provide funds for the building now under erection.

So much for the exterior, but we must know more of the boys, girls, and of the teachers if we would understand the real growth of the schools.

Mr. Hathaway taught the district school in 1856-57, when the public school was all the "grades in one grade." H. J. Waldron was another pioneer teacher. We are not able to find just when he took charge of the schools, but the fact that a man of so much ability shaped the destiny of our early schools is worth more to us than any mere date. He was the last person who taught school alone. Other principals of the schools were J. R. Robb, E. F. Roberts,

J. W. Miller, Dr. O. D. Doane, Levi Walker Patton, S. C. Barrett, G. W. Grubbs, W. L. Worthington, J. S. Brown, Chas. Davidson, Nap. Davis, Price and M. W. Smith.

There were no grades, no examinations, no "passing," no graduation in the early schools. The modern system was worked out slowly, and sometimes painfully. But shall we say that the pioneer schools were not efficient because they lacked all the modern machinery? By no means. All work must be judged from its results. The boys and girls of the '60's, who attended these schools, are the active men and women of today, and many of them are most successful. Indeed, the very crudeness of the time enforced many lessons of sturdy independence. Mistakes were made then as mistakes are made now, but we find more to commend than to criticize. The pioneer school lost much by making arithmetic the test of a child's ability. It was a mistake of the time and not limited to The Dalles. "Your grades and methods serve you well," says a successful teacher of our early schools, "but we older teachers do not regret our lack of the present system; but could we have given more time to language our work would have been stronger."

It was impossible to grade the school successfully when there were but few teachers, and as late as 1880 there were but five teachers employed. Instead of the written examination of the present time, the teacher promoted the pupil when he thought best. No pupil asked, "Did you pass?" It was instead, "Can you do these sums?" We are told that the first examinations were used in the schools in the early '70's, and from that time they were employed as best suited the teachers. The plan now used of monthly examinations in every grade has been followed since Chas. Davidson took charge of schools in Sept. 1884.

Closing exercises at the end of a term were not common in the '60's. The following is in part the account of a school exercise of 1870. "The exercises in Miss Anna Pentland's department of the Public School last Friday afternoon, constituted a very pleasing entertainment. The speakers were prompt in their recitations, and the declaiming was very good considering the age of the scholars. Two papers were read, composed of original contributions by some of the pupils, one entitled "The Bud" by Miss Clara Humason, and one "The Atom." The essays were very good considering the age of the pupils." (Times-Mountaineer.) Literary exercises in the schools must have had the approval of the public, if we are to judge from their frequency in later times.

In 1884 a year of high school work was added to the schools, and the first graduating class received their diplomas in June, 1885. Classes completed the same studies, in '86 and '87; but as the course was extended in '87, there was no class the next year. In 1889 five girls completed this longer course. The high school department was not maintained during the succeeding five years, as it was thought impracticable to maintain the high school, when the Wasco Independent Academy offered much the same as well as a more extended line of work. When the property of the Academy passed into the hands of the school district the public high school was revived, and the following course was adopted by the school board in 1894. For the ninth grade, algebra, rhetoric, civil government, physiology, physical geography, and English classics; for the tenth, higher arithmetic, book-keeping, physics, and English classics; for the eleventh, geometry, English literature, general history, geology, political economy, and a review in the common branches. A class of nine completed the course of study in '97, the next year a class of thirteen, and the class of '98 numbers seventeen.

The secondary schools of Oregon are developing rapidly. In 1896 there were twenty four schools in the state which were accredited work by the State University, in 1897 there were forty three. A graduate of The Dalles High School

is entitled to forty-five credits; sixty-two, practically four years of high school work, being required to make him a freshman in the University. In an ideal system of education there is no break between the secondary school and the college, but at the present time the graduates of The Dalles and of most of the high schools of Oregon, entering college are compelled to make up much language work. This deficiency is a common one in the schools of the state, and the work in the sciences and in English classics is weakened by the loss. Still, if there must be deficiencies let them come in the secondary school, rather than in the common school, where the rank and file of our citizens are educated.

At the present time the public schools are under the able management of John Gavin, assisted by a corps of sixteen teachers. Mr. Gavin has been principal of the school during the last six years, and their growth under his supervision bespeaks his success. Much credit is due, also, to Assistant Principal J. S. Landers. He is a man of high ideals, and his work in the classroom is characterized by its thoroughness in every detail.

According to the school census of '98 there are in the school district 1351 children from four to twenty years of age. There are 760 pupils now enrolled in the schools. The largest attendance for any one month was reached in February, 1898, the reports showing a total enrollment of 799 and an average daily attendance of 715.

During the last four years the work of educating the children of The Dalles has been aided by a private kindergarten taught for two years by Mrs. Ketchum, and now by the Misses Taylor. They receive children at the age of three, and prepare them for primary work. The kindergarten pupils who have entered the public school have been well prepared for their primary work.

MELISSA HILL.

### THE NEW WOMAN.

A LITTLE RHYTHMICAL DISSERTATION BY THE OLD MAN.

That "Man must work  
And woman must weep,"  
Is a discarded old song,  
That's been long put to sleep.

For the woman of now,  
Has done simpering and sighing  
And if tears must be shed,  
Why, the man does the crying.

We find her in law,  
Wise, learned, sagacious,  
And in politics, sure  
Her manner's pugnacious,

From the pulpit her voice  
Urges man to repent;  
From the rostrum she thunders,  
And to congress she's sent.

In athletics she's great;  
She can fence, she can box;  
Chase an aniseed bag  
Or the spoor of a fox.

And when war is declared  
Will she beat a retreat?  
Not on your tin type—  
She'll be there with both feet.

With red fire in her eye,  
Hat pin in her hand,  
What degenerate Don  
Could her onslaught withstand.

The male tyrant's a sham  
And a myth are all Bowers  
We're wearing her collar  
And she's wearing our trousers.

But in our attire  
There's one thing she won't use—  
The dear creature still scorns  
To get into our shoes.

And with mind ever constant  
For the rest of her days,  
She'll continue to buy them  
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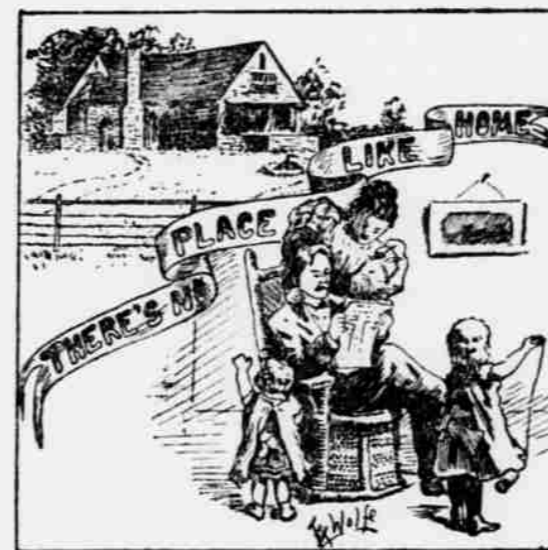
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