

# Reestablishment of Normal Meant Much To Ashland People

After Years of Struggle, Dream of Ashland is Realized When Legislature Passes Bill Authorizing Expenditure of \$175,000 on School Here.

After years of endeavor, the work of the people of Ashland interested in the furtherance of the city as an educational center met with success on March 4 of this year when Governor Pierce signed a bill, passed by both houses of the state legislature, appropriating \$175,000 for the construction of a normal school in Southern Oregon.

The normal school here was not new, but simply the rehabilitation of the old Southern Oregon Normal school, allowed to be discontinued years ago, when, after a bitter political fight, the members of the legislature withdrew their support. Since that time, the people of Ashland, had, at every session of the state legislature, presented a bill calling for the appropriation of money for the rehabilitation of the normal, but every session their efforts went for naught, the bill was voted down.

Finally this year, it was felt that the time was ripe for an intensive fight in the legislature. Represented in Southern Oregon by Senators Dunn of Jackson county, Miller of Josephine county and Representatives Cowgill and Carlin of Jackson, Collier of Klamath county and Cramer of Josephine county, Southern Oregon was represented by an unusually strong set of legislators, men learned in the ways of passing legislation, men politically strong, and men sincere in their belief that the Southern Oregon Normal school should be reestablished and Ashland brought back to her former eminence as an educational center.

These representatives, too, had something to present. Oregon was advancing rapidly in educational matters. County schools were springing up rapidly. More schools were being needed in the cities and towns of the state. But the number of teachers available each year was almost fixed at a number far below the mark needed. The normal school at Monmouth, although usually efficient, was not capable of turning out teachers enough to supply the demand.

In the Northern section of the state, there was an agitation for the enlargement of the Monmouth Normal. However, it was pointed out that students in Southern Oregon, many of them financially unable to bear the expenses of making the long trip to Monmouth, and bearing the expense of living away from home, were at a loss to obtain the education they desired.

J. H. Fuller, secretary of the chamber of commerce was sent to Salem, to attend all meetings of the legislative body, and to

lobby for the passage of the bill. Fuller, known throughout the state as vitally interested in education, was a great factor in obtaining the passage of the bill.

The bill was first brought up in the Ways and Means committee. There, anxiously, the members of the Southern Oregon delegation awaited the action of the other members of the committee, the Southern Oregon members of the committee laboring valiantly in behalf of the bill.

However, in spite of their work, these men were unable to obtain a favorable report on the bill, the Ways and Means committee reporting it out without recommendation. This action was taken, not because the individual members of the committee were opposed to the bill but because they could see no means possible for raising the \$175,000 necessary for its re-establishment.

However, when the bill was brought up in the House, after much debate, during which the people of Ashland anxiously awaited the outcome of their bill, the bill which meant more to them than almost anything they could think of.

Finally, after days of discussion, it was suggested that the Ashland Normal be united with the Pendleton Normal which was also proposed, and both put on the ballot at the 1926 election. The Southern Oregon delegation fought this move, and finally effected the separation of the two bills. The Eastern Oregon representative agreed to allow the Eastern Oregon normal to go on the ballot, while they swung their support in the House to the Southern Oregon Bill, with the result that it passed by an overwhelming vote.

In the Senate, the fight was much the same, but eventually, the work of Senators Dunn and Miller, the splendid efforts of the supporters of the bill bore fruit, and by a vote even more impressive than that given in the house, the Southern Oregon Normal bill was passed.

Then came the anxious days of waiting. Would Governor Pierce, unable to find the necessary money, veto the bill? For days, the fate of the measure hung in the balance, but finally,

on March 4 of this year, word was received here that the governor had affixed his signature to the bill, and the Southern Oregon normal was a step nearer realization. Only referendum proceedings could stop its establishment.

After the necessary time had elapsed, and the referendum could not stop the bill, then Ashland people breathed a sigh of relief, for they knew that again they were to be residents of a city containing a state institution.

In the meanwhile, J. H. Fuller had been appointed a member of the board of regents. Ashland people then knew that the work would be pushed as rapidly as possible.

After several meetings of the members of the board of regents, the architects for the building were selected, and plans for the building ordered drawn up.

The selection of a president for the new institution occupied much of the time of the members of the board. Educational leaders from all over the state made application for the position, and the selection of the right man for the position was a difficult task. Finally, after weeks of work, J. A. Churchill, state superintendent of public instruction, and recognized as one of the leading educators of the West, was selected for the position. Churchill, although he still occupies his position as head of the state educational work, is also in charge of the selection of a faculty, and has such influence with the members of the board of regents when he discusses plans for the institution.

During the past two months, Churchill made a tour of the East, visiting most of the large normal schools of that section. While there, he obtained many valuable pointers on conducting a normal school, which he will put into operation when the normal is opened here.

Bids have been advertised for on the construction of the first unit of the school. The building is to be located on the Boulevard, on a triangle section of land, a portion of which formerly belonged to the city of Ashland, and a part of which was purchased by the people of the city at a cost of \$18,000, to be

presented to the state as a normal school site.

Within a very short time, the actual construction work on the building will be under way and it is believed that by September of next year, the school, completed and equipped, will be opened for the first time.

A tax levy of one twenty fifth of a mill was included in the bill for the maintenance of the Southern Oregon Normal school. This tax, it is believed, will furnish about \$42,000 per year, for the upkeep of the school, but provide for no additional expansion.

However, with the school once in operation, it is felt that the legislature will see fit to enlarge the institution as necessity arises and as it is certain to arise, with the hundreds of men and women of Southern Oregon, making it their Alma Mater.

NEW VINING THEATRE ONE OF FINEST SMALL THEATRES IN ALL STATE OF OREGON

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and I believe it is up to me to the early days when the pioneer co-operate with them, and show them that I appreciate this support," he went on.

On the opening night, after the completion of the redecorating work, capacity houses filled the theatre at both shows. Expressions of delight were heard on every side at the wonderful improvement which had been made on the Vining, and all expressed confidence that the people of Ashland would support the venture.

Mr. Hurst stated before the redecorating work started that during the past five years, the theatre had advanced faster than at any time during the period it has been opened, and that he believed Ashland was entering an era of her greatest development. "I want to keep up with this development," was his only statement when he announced that he would entirely redecorate the theatre.

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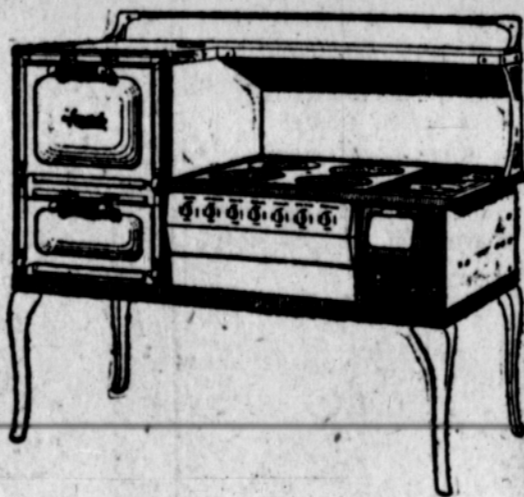
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