

Good Schools for Youth

Nearly 400,000 Students In
Elementary and High Schools

Education has come a long way in Oregon since John Ball, companion of Nathaniel J. Wyeth on his excursion into the Oregon country, taught the half-breed children of Dr. John McLoughlin and his staff at Vancouver in 1832-33. "The White-headed Eagle" was virtually the governor of the primitive Oregon country, and his concern for education has set a pattern for all his successors.

Ball had around him at Fort Vancouver about a dozen swarthy children in what Dr. McLoughlin himself called "the first school in Oregon," and the teacher gave a good report of their interest and effort in the few months he had them in his charge.

Dr. Rex Putnam, Oregon superintendent of public instruction, in his 1948 report, dealt with a somewhat larger group — 379,454 pupils enrolled in elementary and high schools in the year 1957-58. The curricula, naturally, have widened and deepened with the need and the means of meeting it.

Solomon Smith, who succeeded Fall at Fort Vancouver, departed suddenly with the baker's wife after a few months and started, at the home of Joseph Gervais in the French Prairie area, the first school in old Oregon south of the Columbia river. This was not a lasting development, and Rev. George H. Atkinson, coming along in the late forties, is credited with being one of the founders of education in this area. He helped lay the foundations for Pacific University.

The first day school of any kind in Portland — as Mrs. C. M. Cartwright (Charlotte Terwilliger) told it in the Oregon Historical Quarterly in 1903 — was opened in the fall of 1847. It was a private school, and it continued for one quarter. Mrs. Cartwright was in the first class, with 16 other students.

Aims of Oregon Schools

For his tremendous and growing family of school children the state superintendent announced in his 1958 report the general policies and ideas of the state's educational system. His six points follow (in form somewhat condensed):

- 1) Continued maintenance of the system of free public schools.
- 2) Increased financial support for a comprehensive high school, to cope with the increasing numbers and the expansion of the role of the schools in the past 25 years.
- 3) Quality in education and high-level academic and intellectual achievement stressed as the main aims, with competition among children of equal age recognized and stimulated.
- 4) Education for democratic citizenship to continue to be a goal — beneficial to, rather than antagonistic to, academic learning.
- 5) Individual responsibility stressed — responsibility of the pupil to work and learn at the level of his capacity; of the parent for careful guidance and control of the child, for constructive example, for co-operative relationship with the school; responsibility of the teacher for adequate training

around training for his job, thorough preparation for teaching of each lesson, devotion to the total aim of the school; responsibility of the citizen for support of community improvement to reduce problems and enhance the outcome of the school program.

6) Balanced curriculum—strong emphasis on the technology of our society (science and supporting mathematics) but also on the humanities: languages, communication, social and economic institutions, self-expression in music and the arts — probing of the meaning of the universe through philosophy and religion.

Help for the Handicapped

To give children handicapped in any phase of mental and physical equipment the maximum of education they can absorb, the Oregon school system gives special aid toward overcoming the handicap, the superintendent explained in his report. In the school year 1957-58, 168 visually handicapped children were aided with special textbooks and equipment and 110 others similarly handicapped were assisted with readers and special teaching service. Seventy-two emotionally maladjusted pupils were aided with special educational service in 1956-57, and 101 of the similarly afflicted in 1955-56.

In the 1956-57 school year 109 pupils with hearing defects received special educational service, and 106 in the previous school year.

An educational program is carried out in hospital schools. Eleven teachers were employed in five hospitals serving 605 children. This was done at a total cost of \$69,000 for the year.

The school population is still bulging, though the bulge was blunted somewhat in the last two school years. On the census rolls for 1957-58 were 485,586 children of school age, an increase of 10,293 over the preceding school year. The enrollment in public elementary schools in 1957-58 was 283,604 as against 279,715 in the previous year. Private school enrollment in the elementary grades was 26,511 in 1956-57; the figure for 1955-56 not announced.

In the public high school grades the enrollment for the 1957-58 year was 95,950, as compared with 90,289 in the preceding year. The total public school enrollment for 1957-58 was up 9,450 from the 370,004 of 1956-57. The total daily attendance was 315,639 in 1957-58; in the preceding year it was 308,727.

Nearly 14,000 Teachers

To handle all these pupils required 9,491 teachers in the elementary grades in 1955-56; in the next year the number was up to 9,854. In the high schools it took 3,666 teachers to handle the classes in 1955-56; in the next year, 3,811.

School consolidations resulted in a drop of the number of principals from 882 in 1955-56 to 858 in 1956-57, this in the face of increased enrollment.

Oregon education below the college level was handled by 709 districts in 1957-58 as against 716 districts in the preceding year — due

to reorganizations and consolidations.

The number of elementary school units in Oregon in 1957-58 was 1086, an increase of just 1 over the preceding year. The number of high schools was exactly the same in both years, at 223.

Oregon public and private colleges graduated 590 elementary teachers in the spring of 1957. Of these, 401 were employed in the next year in the schools of this state, the percentage accepting teaching posts in the state was 67.9. Graduates who did not teach in the year after their graduation constituted 27 per cent of the whole number graduated.

All of the out-of-state teachers hired for the Oregon schools come from states west of the Mississippi, with Washington providing more than any other state.

A little on the financial side of the picture:

Large Investment In Schools

The state superintendent's reports show that the estimated value of all buildings in the Oregon public school system in 1957-58 was \$208,043,875.96, an increase over the preceding year's figure, which was \$282,783,644.74. Grounds went up in value in the same period from \$19,782,558.52 to \$22,027,835.15, and equipment value decreased from \$40,307,297 to \$38,495,493.

The per capita current expense of high school students was figured at \$453.94 in 1955-56. The next year this had advanced to \$482.18. Per capita cost of handling all the state's elementary pupils in the public schools in 1955-56 was \$322.82; in 1956-57 it was \$351.03. The total operating expense of maintaining Oregon public schools, the reports shows, was, in 1955-56, \$105,973,464.70; in the next year the figure advanced to \$118,601,109.76. The total disbursements for Oregon schools, including capital

outlay, in 1955-56 was \$144,585,414.65; the next year's figure was \$160,815,909.26.

These rather astronomical totals are attributed to several factors, the greatest of which is the loss of nearly half of the purchasing power of the dollar since World War II.

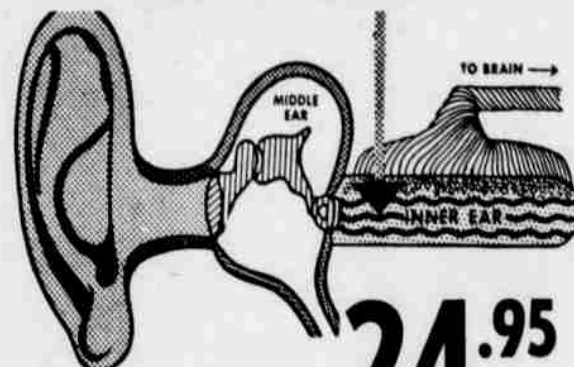
In the early 1890's Pendleton was considered the chief primary market for wool in the United States.

Aurora was founded in 1857 by a German communist society.

Abraham Lincoln was offered the position of territorial governor of Oregon but refused the appointment.

So many languages and dialects were used by coastal Indians of the early Oregon territory that adjoining neighbors could not communicate with one another.

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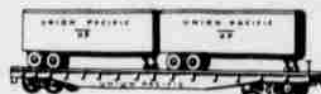
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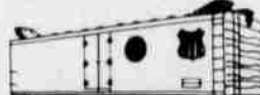
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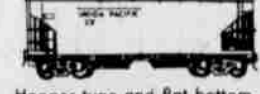
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