

County Observes National School Week

Educators Compare Teaching Methods

By JOHN GUERNSEY

One of the highlights of the Klamath County observance of National School Week is the old book display which will be arranged in the Shaw Stationery window beginning November 12. The idea of the project is to compare the components of an elementary and high school education of 50 years ago with the educational requirements found in the primary and high school programs of today.

Persons throughout the Basin have loaned the books to the schools, with most of the issues being of 1900-1910 vintage, and some of the texts dating back as far as the 1870s.

The schools and school systems of the Basin and the country have undergone extensive changes during the past 50 years, and when browsing through the texts of a half century ago a person has the opportunity of realizing the full extent of the transformation.

Primarily, it appears that the scope of an education 50 years ago involved the covering of a limited number of topics in an impressively thorough manner. The purpose today seems to be the handling of a greatly larger number of subjects with a lesser amount of time being given to any individual subject.

For example, students in the second grade were asked to handle reading, spelling and arithmetic when attending classes 50 years ago. Today the second grade curricula deals with reading, spelling, arithmetic, language, phonics, art, music, physical education, science and sociology.

Also, in both the lower grades and the high school classes, the students of today have a greater number of texts and a wider range of material to cover than did their parents in the same grades.

It is also evident that an education of 50 years ago involved much more repetition than does the same education today. Students in any given class were often assigned to study and report on the same lesson or spelling selections several times, with the obvious intent being to have the material thoroughly covered and to a large part retained.

The repetition factor is not so apparent in the studies of today. The instructional program seems to be speeded up for the apparent purpose of offering a more general education and familiarizing the students with a greater number of subjects.

One reason for this might be that the student of a half century ago was being prepared for his limited future, whereas the student of today is schooled to take his place in a world of more expansive horizons of opportunity. That is, the student of 50 years ago was thoroughly schooled in the educational fundamentals such as reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling and a smattering of history. The chances of his moving into the field of higher education were very slim, and it was probable that he would go from school to working on the farm, in the mill, or in the expanding field of industrial plants.

With the student of today it is altogether different. The chances are excellent that the average primary pupil will complete his high school education, and the chances are good that he will receive some college training or be graduated from one of the institutes of higher learning.

The young adult's choice of avocation is much broader today, more of his years are devoted to schooling, and it's probable that he has a much more encompassing education than did his father or grandfather.

However, and based on the content of the texts of today and a half-century ago, it would appear that an eighth grade student of 50 years ago was much better

schooled in the reading, writing and arithmetic fundamentals than is his student counterpart today. The material in the texts that papa used was well arranged, well planned, and appears to have been more advanced than does the material covered by a student in a corresponding school grade today.

The texts further point to the fact that students of the early 1900s had less fun and fewer diversionary programs to enjoy during the school day. That also is perhaps accountable to the times. The student of 50 years ago was probably going to spend fewer years in the form of formal education, and the educators were attempting to prepare him the best possible during the abbreviated span of years. He went to school to study and that was about it.

The student of today, however, takes part in a vastly greater number of extracurricular activities and to a more noticeable extent blends playing with study.

The trend in schooling today seems to be to have a child live in a child's world. The serious nature of the texts of 50 years ago would make it appear that the trend of 1900 was to prepare a child for the not distant day when he would be on his own.

Another interesting feature is the consolidation of texts which was common around 1900. Some of the arithmetic books, for example, could be bought by a student in his fifth year and used through the ninth year. Today a student has a different book for each year in most instances, and in some cases has a different book for each semester.

It is also apparent from the courses of study that an eighth grade graduate of 50 years ago was a much more proficient speller than in his counterpart today.

Although the student of today perhaps learns most elementary and high school topics less thoroughly than did his parent, the 1957 student has one big advantage in that he is blessed with being able to learn faster than did his parent in the same grade.

This improved speed capacity for learning is largely attributable to improved teaching methods, better arranged directions, and more highly prepared teachers. One of the principal factors in the speed learning employed today is the extensive use of illustrations with written materials, coupled with a wide assortment of visual aid training methods.

It is also true that the teacher of today is required to pass a more rigid and extensive group of pre-teaching requisites before being accredited to teach.

The short of the long is that Johnny might not be able to spell or find the cube root of 986 as readily as could his student counterpart of 50 years ago. However, and due to his vastly expanded education, the Johnny of today can tell you more about Sputnik and the American foreign policy than the Johnny of 50 years ago could tell you about the internal combustion engine which was just coming into its own at the turn of the century.

THE COVER

The cover picture for this week's Herald and News Magazine Section of Klamath Basin Living was taken by staff photographer Don Kettler and features the old Spring Lake schoolhouse which was built in 1914. A 4 x 5 Crown Graphic camera was used set at f 22 and 100th of a second.



LOOKING OVER SOME OF THE older text books which will be on display at Shaw's Stationery during National Education Week is Mrs. Emma Stevenson, second grade instructor at Twyla Ferguson School. The books, mostly of the 1907 vintage, will be on display with current day texts as a means of comparing the educational components of today with the requirements for the same school years 50 years ago.



A. C. OLSON, dean of Klamath County school teachers has seen much of the school system growth within the past half century. Olson joined the Klamath County school system at Beatty about 34 years ago and since that time has served as an instructor and principal in the Beatty, Bonanza, Malin, Altamont and Twyla Ferguson schools. He has been principal at the latter school for the past three years.

New Poultry Law To Be Discussed

One of the 12 public meetings to discuss the Portland meeting, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the auditorium of the U. S. Interior Department Building, 1001 N. Lloyd Blvd. All interested persons are invited to attend.

By January 1, 1959, all poultry and poultry products moving in interstate commerce or in designated major consuming areas must be brought under compulsory inspection for wholesomeness.

Farmers Use FHA Funds

During the first three years of the Farmers Home Administration's soil and water conservation loan program, 11,430 farmers borrowed more than 40.5 million dollars to improve their soil and water resources, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently.

Of the total amount loaned, nearly 30 million dollars was advanced by private lenders on an insured basis, according to Kermit H. Hansen, the agency's administrator.

Loans to develop farmstead water supplies, irrigation systems, soil conservation measures, and other land improvement practices including development of permanent pastures were first made on a nation-wide basis in October, 1954.

Previously, only water facility loans had been available and that type of credit was extended just in the 17 Western states.

Approximately 7,230 loans were made to individual farmers; 4,200 other farmers obtained the credit as members of 118 non-profit associations.

About 81 per cent of all loan funds were used for developing irrigation facilities on 600,000 acres. This included purchase of pumps, motors and piping, drilling of wells, and construction and repair of irrigation ditches and laterals. Remainder of the funds was used to develop water systems for household use and farm livestock, and for such soil conservation measures as terracing, pasture improvement, drainage, brush removal, and planting trees.

Repayments up to June 30, 1957 totaled about \$7,960,000 in principal, interest and insurance charges. Repayment schedules depended upon the purposes for which the funds were advanced and the estimated income of the applicants. The maximum repayment period for a loan is 20 years to individuals and 40 years for associations. Individuals may borrow up to \$25,000 and the ceiling on association loans is \$250,000.

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