



ORSON A. STEARNS

School Named For Orson A. Stearns

Editor's Note: Members of the Klamath County School Board recently voted to name the Crest Street School in honor of Orson A. Stearns, a well known pioneer in the Klamath Basin area. The school, located at the intersection of Crest and Laverne streets, is now under construction and is scheduled for completion this fall. Mrs. Buena C. Stone, an instructor at Fremont School, has written the following biographical sketch on Stearns' life. The information was gleaned from the historical library files at the Klamath Falls Junior High School. Mrs. George Ager, a daughter of Mr. Stearns, is presently living in Klamath Falls and will be the honored guest during future dedication ceremonies at the school.

By BUENA C. STONE

Many famous men have crisscrossed the Klamath Basin — Fremont, Carson, Ogden, Fitzpatrick and Young, to mention a few. The subject of our sketch was no mere passerby: He remained to build.

Orson A. Stearns came to Oregon with his parents in 1853, when he was 10 years of age. Being at an impressionable age during the trip across the plains, his reminiscences of the Southern Route through the Klamath country are one of our best sources of information today. His family settled near Talent.

Young Orson enlisted in Company I, 1st Oregon Volunteers, November 17, 1864, and served as sergeant. Our country was in the throes of the tragic War Between the States, and only volunteer troops were available for patrolling the frontier and checking Indian depredations.

In May 1865, Company I was ordered to cross the Cascades to the newly-established post called Fort Klamath. Their duties carried them into Eastern Oregon. They had several campaigns against the hostile Indians in the Snake country, and they helped build Camp Alvord. Between such forays there was wild hay to be cut and wood to stack for the long winter. A letter from the young soldier, written from Fort Klamath in 1867, is preserved in the school files. It describes much of a soldier's life at Fort Klamath in the 1860's.

Orson Stearns helped build the road across the mountains, and over that rough path supplies were hauled from the Rogue River Valley. He was the first to descend to Crater Lake, which he named Lake Majesty, a name of dignity

which he preferred all his days to the more obvious "Crater."

His was one of the last companies to be mustered out, and the men were in service until July 19, 1867. But young Stearns had been looking around as duties took him ranging far from the fort, and he had fallen in love with the Klamath Basin. Already he had selected the spot for his home. When military duties were over he took a pre-emption claim, and later a homestead, of 417 acres about seven miles west of present Klamath Falls, between Keno road and Klamath River.

Spring Meadows Ranch, as he named it, became the home of Orson Stearns and his bride, Margaret Jane Riggs, and there they reared their family. The place took its name from the many springs which surrounded his garden area near the river and kept the soil damp enough for fine crops all summer. Farm produce and cattle were the chief sources of income.

Stearns had a part in the life of the growing area. He served as justice of the peace; was a member of the State Legislature; was a battler for the rights of the homesteaders against the land grabbers; and was the president of the Klamath County Historical Society.

He had a facile pen. As a soldier at Fort Klamath he edited a post newspaper. Once, finding life rather dull, he and his helpers lightened their day by writing a fanciful story about an imaginary earthquake there. So keen was their imagination and so vivid their description that the account was widely carried by newspapers of the United States, and even found its way into at least one book!

All his life, letters and articles written by Mr. Stearns appeared in local and Portland newspapers. One letter, in the Ashland Tidings, is of interest for the dedication of the new school named in his honor. It announces the arrival of his daughter, Blanche. Mrs. George Ager, who will be the guest of honor when the school is dedicated. The letter follows:

Merganser, Oregon, May 27, 1874

Editor Tidings: Today furnishes an item in the birth of a daughter to me, a 9½ pounder. Almost another voter! The girl crop is far above the average this season, both in quality and quantity. There have already appeared five of that sex in the Plevna district since winter-future rancheresses.

Faithfully yours,
O. A. Stearns.

They're Cooking With Nuclear Power; But Them Thar' Kilowatts Cost Plenty

By DOUGLAS LARSEN
NEA Staff Correspondent

SHIPPINGPORT, Pa. (NEA) — The morning toast of the citizens of nearby Pittsburgh pops up with a pretty conventional tan in spite of the fact that it's cooked with some of the most exclusive, expensive electricity in the world.

This unique kilowattage is generated here from what is officially called the world's first large-scale nuclear power plant built exclusively for civilian purposes. The British and Russian electric power reactors were built primarily to produce plutonium for weapons it is pointed out.

Construction of the Shippingport Atomic Power Station began in the spring of 1955 when President Eisenhower poked a button in the White House which activated some do-dad and started a bulldozer breaking ground. On December 2, 1957, the reactor began cooking with atoms. On December 18 the first electricity it produced was fed into the Pittsburgh electric power system. And on December 23 it began putting out at its full design capacity of 68,000 kilowatts.

Now, this May 26, Ike will poke another button in the White House and some do-dad will be activated as the symbol of the official dedication of the plant.

Between Ike's poking of these buttons the price of the Shippingport project soared from its originally estimated cost of 36 million dollars to a final cost of 121.4 million.

The U.S. taxpayer has chipped in 98.4 million dollars of this cost because the plant will be used for general reactor study work. The Duquesne Light Company, which operates the plant and feeds its output to the Pittsburgh area, has tossed in 22.5 million. And the Westinghouse Electric Corporation, which built the reactor, has spent a half-million on the project.

On the basis of the originally figured plant cost the electrical output was estimated to be about 64 mills per kilowatt hour. Electricity produced by coal costs about six mills per kilowatt hour.

With the limited experience they've had here so far, they're still sticking with the 64 mill rate. The extra cost of the plant has been charged off to research.

But with all of the plant's obvious historic importance as a nuclear power "first," the 64 mill cost of its power has made this plant a major issue in the power field on the eve of its dedication. For example, Joseph E. Moody, president of the Southern Coal Producers' Association, says:

"Once the cost of producing power from the Shippingport reactor has been established, its value, for all practical purposes, comes to an end. Operation of the Shippingport reactor will not reduce the costs of its power by comparison with other fuels, nor will it teach anything not known when the reactor was finished and operated long enough to prove what it could do."

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission boss Lewis L. Strauss; the man in charge of the reactor design and construction, Adm. Hyman Rickover, and other officials connected with the plant readily admit the high cost of the plant's output. But they say that plenty of information will be learned from its operation. They claim this information is essential to have if eventual economic electricity is to be achieved.

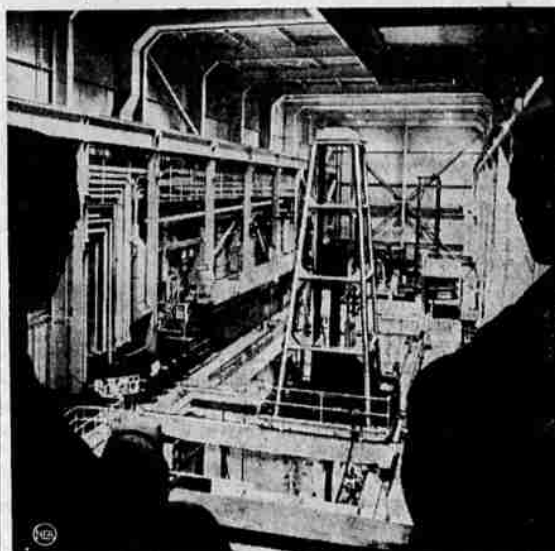
Elaborate instruments have been built into every part of the reactor so its operation can be carefully studied. Remote TV cameras have been placed inside parts of the reactor so engineers can see exactly what is happening when it is operating at various loads and capacities.

Twenty-five extra engineers and

scientists work on the research aspects of the plant, also contributing to its high cost.

As far as the citizens of Pittsburgh go, they're convinced that atomic kilowatts are the same as coal kilowatts—for making toast. They're convinced the plant is

not likely to blow up some fine morning or even expose them to the most minute amount of radiation. This has been accomplished with an effective community-relations program. And it's a nuclear-age accomplishment in itself, plant officials claim.



LIKE A MINIATURE oil well, derrick-like structure inside the world's first full-scale atomic electric generating plant for civilian needs at Shippingport, Pennsylvania, supports a special remote control fuel element extracting tool.

Turkey Production Is Running Behind

Turkey production in the United States is running behind last year. Since last September 1, 36,000 turkey poulters have been hatched. This compares to 43,000 for the same period a year earlier.

In California, the poult hatch during the period this year was 9,075,000 compared to just under 11 million the previous year. This includes 8,684,000 of the heavy breeds other than whites.

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