

Pages From Our Past

By Kenneth L. Holmes, writer historian

NORTHWEST'S FIRST PRINTING PRESS

Set down May 16, 1839, as a most important date in the history of printing and publishing on the Pacific slope. It was on that day the pioneer missionary, the Rev. Henry Spalding, and a printer, Edwin Hall, set up the first print shop west of the Rockies. The press occupied one corner of a tiny cabin at the Lapwai mission near present Lewiston, Idaho. It was used from 1839 to 1846 by Spalding. During those years eight

books were printed in Nez Perce and one in the language of the Spokane Indians.

On March 15, 1838, Spalding wrote his mission board, "I have completed an alphabet in the Nez-Perces language, & a spelling book with some 60 or 70 scripture & animal cuts explained, which I shall send to the Islands to be printed, by the first opportunity." By the "Islands" he meant Hawaii. The Presbyterian missionaries in Hawaii, however, on learning of Spalding's needs, sent over a small Ramage press, and with it came Edwin Hall, an experienced printer, and his wife. The press was carried up the Columbia by boat and portage. At Ft. Walla Walla on April 30, 1839, the Halls met Spalding & Dr. Marcus Whitman. It must have been a rugged trip for the Halls. Mrs. Hall was pregnant, was to give birth to a baby at the Whitman mission the following November. Henry Spalding wrote in October telling about the trip from Fort Walla Walla to Lapwai: "We had a pleasant journey up the (Snake) river. Mrs. Hall alone in the canoe pulled by 3 men—the remainder of us on horses, obliged frequently to cut high points which presented impassable bluffs by the waters edge. We reached home in 7 days travel. Mr. Hall arranged our little printing establishment & printed for us the first book in the Nez Perces language."

By August 15, 1839, 500 copies of a primer had been printed entitled "NEZ-PERCES FIRST BOOK: DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN AND NEW BEGINNERS." There were two editions of this first book. Spalding was experimenting with different alphabets for the Nez-Perce tongue. There was no written language for the Indian tribes, and the missionary was compelled to make his new alphabet fit the font of type which had come with the press. On the journey from Walla Walla to Lapwai a mule carrying the press had fallen down a cliff and been killed. The men recovered the press and most of the hopelessly pied type. Most of the capital B's had been lost and a quantity of several other letters.

The two above-mentioned primers, the very first books published in the Pacific Northwest, are now rare collector's items, especially the first one. One scholar says that Spalding's endeavor was "bibliographically speaking, the most important event in the annals of the Northwest." How can we today conceive of the difficulties surmounted by Spalding and Hall in rendering a written language for the Nez Perces and in setting up the press, printing copy and binding the little books?

The best description of the printing operation was written by another Presbyterian missionary, the Rev. Elkanah Walker, who visited Spalding, in the winter of 1842-43. Walker and Spalding printed a primer for the Spokane tribe. Walker wrote: "A small book has been printed in the native language. The type was mostly set by myself. You will readily suppose that it was slow work as it was wholly new business both to Mr. Spalding and myself. Mr. S. understood working the press. It required no little time to arrange the press as it had been taken down and laid aside since Mr. Hall left the country. Among the most difficult things to be done was the making of a new roller which we succeeded in after three or four attempts. We not only succeeded in making one, but we made a GOOD ONE."

After the Whitman massacre, the press was taken to the Willamette valley settlements. Now it may be seen on display at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland.

Couple Attends PI Exposition

MIST — Bernard Dowling of Vancouver spent a few days here at the home of his father assisting him with some repair work on his water line.

Visitors at the Charles Hansens Saturday were Mr. and Mrs. Howard Thompson of Clatskanie, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Isakson of Midland and Mr. and Mrs. Abe Wusanen of Marshland.

Mr. and Mrs. Shalmon Libel were in Fairview Sunday where they visited Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Libel.

Mr. and Mrs. John Crawford were in Portland Friday and attended the PI show that evening.

A lady from Honduras, Central America is spending a few days at the home of Alma and Mary Garlock.

The M. H. Club meets Thursday, October 25 at the home of Alma and Mary Garlock.

Mr. and Mrs. Al Kivar spent the week end at the Webber cottage. Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Reynolds called on them Sunday.

Among the hunters in Eastern Oregon over the week end were Ray, Willard and Lloyd Garlock and Mr. Goodwin. They brought a couple of deer back.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hansen left last Tuesday for the Blue mountain on a hunting trip. They were joined there by Mr. and Mrs. Ted Kulju of Portland.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawton Waddell were in Gearhart recently where they were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Waddell. Mrs. Waddell and Ralph celebrated their birthdays which were just a few days apart.

No excuse in the world is good enough to excuse the man who accomplishes nothing.

DO YOU PAY TAXES?



ROY S. WILBURN

Oregon Laws place the responsibility of collecting taxes, both real and personal in the lap of the Sheriff. These duties and responsibilities are clearly defined and are purely routine in nature. Their proper administration depend on 3 things: impartiality, courtesy and punctuality. This important phase of the Sheriff's duties will receive my personal attention and a courteous and efficient staff will at all times be at your service. Your every contact with the Sheriff's office will be met with courteous and prompt service.

VOTE (X)
ROY S. WILBURN
For Sheriff

Pd. Adv. by Roy Wilburn, St. Helens, Ore.

Vernonia Eagle

THURSDAY, OCT. 25, 1962 5

KING'S Grocery-Market
 Phone HA 9-6015 Riverview
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 SHOP BY PHONE — YOU RING, WE BRING

VERNONIA LOGGER

FOOTBALL

VERNONIA

VS.

CONCORDIA

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26

GREENMAN FIELD--8 P.M.

THE LOGGER BOOSTERS LISTED BELOW URGE YOU TO ATTEND THE GAME

Vernonia Drug Co.	Sam's Food Store
Standard Oil Joe Magoff	Vernonia Golf Club Mr. & Mrs. G. Reed
Lew's Place John & Helen Wylde	Bob's Union Service Mr. & Mrs. B. Thompson
Vernonia Variety & Shell Oil	BEAUTY SHOPPE Essie Nance, Esther Ring Veda Alexander
Ed Roediger Jr. PLUMBING	Linn Grocery
Ralph's Chevron Ralph Sturdevant	Vernonia Card Rm. Rex & John McRae
Curl's Grocery	Vernonia Insurance Bill J. Horn
Nehalem Service Lloyd Callister	Henry and Polly Hudson
Enco Service Joe Grosche	Sunnyside Service Hans & Vi Slette
Nichols Variety	King's Grocery
Dessy's Bowl Louis & Marion Lemaick	The Pine Cone Mr. & Mrs. L. Caron
Western Store Mr. & Mrs. Cliff White	Vernonia Branch The U.S. National Bank

Ben's Barber Shop	Kate's Cafe
Mill Market and Lockers	Vernonia Milk Farms
Fisher's Electric George and Sherm	Knight's Beauty Shp Mrs. Murel Folken
Brunsmann Hdwre. & Electric	Spofford's Gardens & Floral Service
Darigold Farms	Mist Store
Allied J and H Lumber Company	Fuiten's Chapel In The Hills
Vernonia Clinic Drs. Hobart & Buell	Vernonia Service George Johnson
Oloff Lee Hansen Dentist	West Coast Telephone Co.
Dr. D. H. Kramer Optometrist	West Oregon Electric Co-op.
Bellingham Grocery Birkenfeld, Oregon	Union Oil Co. Loel Roberts
Vernonia Auto Company	Ace's Radio and T.V. Service
Vernonia Federal Credit Union	Standard Dairy Products