

# Records of Early Days Give Information on Development of Present High School, Graduates of First Classes

As a background for those who are not familiar with the history of the Nehalem valley, the following is quoted from a speech given by Oscar G. Weed at the dedication of the present high school building in 1953.

"In 1875 the year following the coming to this part of the Nehalem valley of the first settlers, there was a need of a school. To accomplish that, John Parker and Henry Van Blaricom made a trip to see the county school superintendent. They walked to Portland over the Pebble creek trail, went from Portland to Rainier by boat, then walked five miles below Rainier to what is now known as Hudson where they contacted John E. Gilbreath, Columbia county school superintendent.

"As a result of this trip, on October 27, 1875, school district number 12 was organized and a log school house was constructed by volunteer labor on land donated by Clark Parker located at what is now known as the corner of Tenth street and the highway in Riverview. In the winter of

1876-77, the first school was taught there by Ozias Cherrington." (The second term was taught by Judson, Weed, father of Oscar Weed. Cherrington and Weed had both homesteaded on the Nehalem river south of Vernonia in 1876 and had come to Oregon from Ohio.)

From that time on, as more settlers came to the valley, other schools were organized at close enough intervals for pupils to walk to them. There were the Keasey and Pettijohn schools up Rock creek, the McDonald and Braun schools, for the Pebble and Beaver creek areas, the school that was probably the second one built which was near the present intersection of Stoney Point and Rock Creek roads, the Pleasant Hill and Kist schools south of Vernonia, and others which have long since been forgotten by most people.

With the growth of the valley and the organization of other school districts, the need for a high school became more and more evident. In some of the grade schools, all of which had all eight grades in one room, teachers who were qualified taught the subjects of the ninth and tenth grades also. Some pupils

were sent elsewhere to live with relatives or board out so as to attend high school, but many were not getting that education because it was not available here.

In 1916, through the efforts of James Claybaugh, a teacher who first came here to teach at Pleasant Hill, then came into Vernonia, a high school district was organized with the Vernonia, Pleasant Hill, Kist, Keasey and Pettijohn districts entering into the first union high school district in Columbia county, known as Union high school district No. 1.

The first classes were held in the fall of 1916 with James Claybaugh as principal and the only teacher. Classes were held in some rooms of the old grade school building which stood where the Washington school is now.

Mrs. Vera Aldridge of Timber route recalls that she was a member of that first freshman class. Her name was then Vera Wood and she was the daughter of William Wood, one of the earliest homesteaders in the Stoney Point area.

Other students who had obtained ninth and tenth grade subjects in the local schools, and some who had gone elsewhere made up the sophomore and junior classes. The second year, another teacher was added, a Miss Moomaw.

On May 17, 1918, the first commencement was held by Vernonia high school. The search for information brought to light a program from that commencement. It had been printed by the Clatskanie Chief since there was no printing shop here at that time. The program did not list the graduates but it has been determined that there were eight, four

girls who were present to receive their diplomas and each of whom had a part on the program, and four boys who had heard the call to service in World War I and who were granted their diplomas in absentia in appreciation of their service to their country.

The class roll was as follows: Christina Sword, Elizabeth Counts, Pearl Counts, Maudie Gessell, Russell Stanton, Omar Sheeley, Glen Sheeley and Everett Tucker. Of these, three are now deceased: Maudie Gessell Duncan, Russell Stanton and Everett Tucker. Omar Sheeley is the only one still living here.

In 1919, two girls were graduated: Pearl Rogers (now deceased) and Gertrude Brown.

In 1920, the class roll included Theodore Keasey, Sarah Baker (now deceased), Iris Baker and Gladys Malmsten.

In 1921, class members were Hazel Malmsten, Lola Brown, Ellen Enstrom, Earl Condit and Gale Stanton.

In 1922, diplomas were presented to Thelma Pettijohn, Lucy Stanton, Eula John, Hilda Tucker, Lesta Weed and Alvin Parker.

This was the last class to graduate from the three rooms in the upstairs part of the old grade school building for in that year, the railroad was being built into Vernonia, the mill site was being cleared and an influx of new residents was beginning.

In 1922-23, the rooms in the elementary building were needed for expanded elementary classes and the union high school district built its first building, the one facing A street where the Culbertson home now is. While it was being built, classes were held in the old grange hall, now the union hall, until November when the new building was ready for use. Teachers during that trying year were William Kelty and Miss Marjorie Holaday.

Oscar Weed who served on the board of the union high school district for more than 30 years recalled that the cost of that building was \$25,000. It was used until 1953 when the present building was erected at a cost many times greater and with facilities that match those of any district this size and of which this community is and should be justly proud.

The classes of 1923, 24 and 25 were still small and were as follows:

1923: Ruth Heverling, Margaret Shubert, Bessie McDonald, Isabel Condit, Florian Mills, Harry Keasey and LeRoy Malmsten.

1924: Ernest Narver, Edwin Condit, Benita Parker, Helen Brown, Margaret Tousley, John Wharton, Blanche Bergerson and Weston Sheeley.

1925: Emerald John, Doris Ackersstadt, Ruth Peterson, Lillian Condit, Ray Mills, Robert Hoff-

man, Elbert Kelley, Burford Wilkerson, Harold Smith and Loel Hieber.

In 1926, the second year after the start of the Oregon American mill, the class was graduated which went into the new (1923) building as freshmen. That class numbered 28.

Leading up to the time of the building of the first high school building, other districts had joined the union high school district.

Time has not permitted a seeking out of all the facts to determine just which ones they were or when they became a part of it. Also, definite information has not been available about the former Birkenfeld high school, when it was established or how long it operated. It is hoped those facts can be brought to light to add to

the historical data concerning the progress toward the Vernonia high school of today. It has been determined that Francis Nordstrom graduated at Birkenfeld in 1929, and Howard Jones and E. T. (Boone) Johnston in 1935. Perhaps they can furnish some information concerning the history of that school and when it ceased operation.

A vote of appreciation is extended to these new teachers, Miss Antles and Mr. Jackson, for a new approach to homecoming that has stirred memories and made former students take a look back through the years to their own school days and also to take a look at the school of today with pride because it offers the best in education to the citizens of tomorrow.

## Vernonia Eagle

4 THURSDAY, NOV. 1, 1962

RE-ELECT  
**SPENCER L. YOUNCE**  
For Columbia County  
**SHERIFF**  
"ONE GOOD TERM DESERVES ANOTHER"  
VOTE 122X  
November 6, General Election  
Pd. Adv. by Spencer Younce, Warren, Ore.



## DON'T MISS THIS . . .

Friday, November 2

### "THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS"

Will life be real? Will we know each other?

Saturday, November 3

### "THE END OF THE WORLD"

The Bible tells how the world will end.

*"It Is Written"*

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

2nd and Nehalem

7:30 P.M.

FREE

FREE

## 16 Students On Honor Roll

The first honor roll for this year was released by Vernonia high school last week at the close of the first six-weeks period and shows 16 students on the coveted listing. Of these, five are seniors; four are shown for each of the junior and sophomore classes and only three freshmen were able to achieve mention.

While the ratio of boys to girls in the entire school is approximately two to one, it is noted that out of the 16 names on the honor roll, 14 are girls and only two boys. This reverses a trend noted last year by some classes where boys took the major share of scholastic honors.

The complete roll is as follows: Freshmen: Christine Bender, Sheryl Ford, Kathleen McMinn.

Sophomores: Ella Gaylean, Laura Floeter, Linda Jensen, Vicki Pollock.

Juniors: Betty Armstrong, Charlene Haskins, Ruth Hugley, Jim Lindsay.

Seniors: Sue Alexander, Gary Johnston, Cathy DuPuis, Marian Mathews, Mary Steen.



ELECT  
**ROY NELSON**  
Democratic Candidate For  
**COLUMBIA COUNTY CLERK**

"Youthful, Energetic and Thoroughly Qualified for the Job"

## Roy Nelson Has The Background And Experience Needed . . .

- ★ BORN AND RAISED IN ST. HELENS AREA
- ★ GRADUATE OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
- ★ OFFICER IN U.S. AIR FORCE FOR 4 YEARS  
Serving 3½ Years in Work Similar to the County Clerk's Job.

### ROY NELSON'S CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

Member of Warren Grange, St. Helens AF&AM No. 32  
And Secretary of the St. Helens Jaycees

For Your Assurance of Sound Efficient Management of the Columbia County CLERK'S OFFICE . . . Support and Vote for

**ROY NELSON in the General Election November 6**

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Roy Nelson, Rt. 1, Box 822, Warren, Oregon

## ROYAL TRITON WORLD'S FINEST MOTOR OIL

Your car deserves no less than the best—Royal Triton.  
Bob's Union Service provides it for you.

**BOB'S  
UNION SERVICE**



## TIMBER OWNERS---

Get the most out of your blown down.

Call

## NORTHWEST PILING CO.

Phone 543-2548

Scappoose, Ore.

Evenings: St. Helens 1096

Jay Ahlborn

## VOTE! General ELECTION Nov. 6 Oregon AFL-CIO Convention RECOMMENDS

U. S. Senator—WAYNE MORSE

Congress—

1st District—R. BLAINE WHIPPLE

2nd District—AL ULLMAN

3rd District—EDITH GREEN

4th District—ROBERT B. DUNCAN

Governor—no recommendation

Labor Commissioner—NORMAN O. NILSEN

### STATE LEGISLATURE

#### Baker-Grant Counties

Representative—

Clinton P. Haight

#### Benton County

Representative—

no recommendation

#### Benton-Lane Counties

Representative—

no recommendation

#### Benton-Polk Counties

Senator—

no recommendation

#### Clackamas County

Senator—

Tom Monaghan

Representative—

Beulah J. Hand, Elmer McClure, Michael Patrick McKernan, Juanita Orr

#### Clatsop County

Representative—

W. H. (Bill) Holmstrom

#### Clatsop-Columbia Counties

Senator—

Daniel A. Thiel

#### Columbia County

Representative—

Wayne Turner

#### Coos County

Representative—

Clarence Barton

#### Coos-Curry Counties

Representative—

Carl Back

#### Crook-Deschutes-Jefferson Counties

Representative—

Ben Evick

#### Douglas County

Representative—

Sidney Leiken, W. O. (Bun) Kelsay

#### Gilliam-Morrow-Sherman-Umatilla-Wheeler Counties

Representative—

Jack L. Smith

#### Harney-Malheur Counties

Representative—

no recommendation

#### Hood River-Wasco Counties

Representative—

Katherine Musa

#### Jackson County

Senator—

Henry F. Padgham, Jr.

Representative—

Alva N. (Al) Bradford, Charles W. Cray, James A. Redden

#### Josephine County

Representative—

Carroll W. Dewey

#### Klamath County

Representative—

Walter H. Turner

#### Klamath-Lake Counties

Representative—

no recommendation

#### Lane County

Senator—

Edward N. Fadeley, Kenneth A. Poole, Glen M. Stadler

Representative—

Richard (Dick) Eymann, Glenn Hammaker, Richard L. Kennedy, J. Michael McCloskey, Veola Peterson Wilmot

#### Lincoln County

Representative—

Thos. R. McClellan

#### Linn County

Senator—

no recommendation

Representative—

William F. Gwinn, Nancy Kirkpatrick

#### Marion County

Senator—

Mary E. Eyre, Clifford W. Ferguson

Representative—

Morris K. Crothers, Cornelius C. Bateson, L. B. Day, Mrs. Tom (Marguerite) Wright

#### Polk County

Representative—

Leslie V. Bahr

#### Tillamook County

Representative—

Edward F. Ridderbusch

#### Umatilla County

Representative—

no recommendation

#### Union-Wallowa Counties

Representative—

no recommendation

#### Washington County

Representative—

Robert E. Jones, G. W. Kurtz, G. Johnny Parks

#### Washington-Yamhill Counties

Senator—

W. C. (Bill) Schwenn

#### Yamhill County

Representative—

Russell S. Lehman

### STATE BALLOT MEASURES

Nos. 1 through 7, vote YES.

Nos. 9 and 10, vote NO.

These are RECOMMENDATIONS only. Each voter must exercise his own judgment. The AFL-CIO is satisfied to present the issues and the candidates on the record. Each of the candidates we have recommended has a record in office — if he has held public office — that in our opinion served the best interests of the state and the nation. If the recommended candidate has not held public office we have judged him upon his views concerning a wide variety of issues.

(Paid for by Ore. AFL-CIO, 306 Labor Temple, Portland 1, Oregon, J. T. Marr, Exec. Sec.)