

## THE HISTORY OF PRAIRIE CITY SCHOOLS

In the early days there were no schoolhouses and school was held in any building available. The first school was a small lean-to about three miles up Dixie Creek. There were few children in the community, not enough to support a regular school, so they held their classes in this lean-to. A few years after this, a log schoolhouse was built on the Sherman Davis place, which is situated north of the present town site, (Gifford McIntosh is presently living on the site). Short terms of school were held here and the desks were of primitive pine. Long boards, supported at each end, served as seats.

The first teacher's name was Mr. Creswall. He hailed from Portland. Before his school term was up, he returned home, leaving the school without a teacher. Another teacher, who taught in the winter of 1871-72, was Mary Rings. She later became Mrs. Claflin. This school was maintained by subscription, that is, the parents paid money for the support of the school. Salaries were very low, and some teachers received only \$20.00 a month.

The first school of which there is any permanent record, was established in the winter of 1876-77 at the present nursing home site, and was taught by a man named White. School was in session for only a few weeks, however. The next year J. W. Mack, who had just arrived in the community, was engaged to conduct school, with Mrs. Mack ably serving as his assistant. The session lasted three months this time. There was an enrollment of ninety-seven pupils consisting of all ages and sizes. Soon after this the school was divided into two divisions, one for the boys, taught by Mr. Kellogg, and one for the girls, taught by Miss Harris. The boys were taught in the schoolhouse, while the girls were schooled in the Grange Hall, which stood at the site of Clark's Garage (now the Prairie City Feed Store). During this period there were many Indian scares and school was interrupted at different times. In 1885, this schoolhouse was sold to the Methodist Church Society and a new frame building of a larger size was erected to accommodate the growing enrollment. When the frame was partially up, a hard wind blew it down with slight injury to several of the workers. It was soon repaired, however, as were the workmen, and the building was completed. This building, together with the furniture and apparatus, valued at the sum of \$3,500.00 was destroyed by fire December 16, 1901. School was held in the Methodist Church for the remainder of the school year. During the summer of that year a new schoolhouse was built, and it was ready for use that fall. That winter, however, the new building, (which was on the present nursing home site), was slightly damaged from a fire resulting from a defective flue, and school was closed for about a week for repairs.

In the year 1902, Prairie City and John Day met at Prairie City to hold their first rally which was similar to the present day track meet. It was such a success that they held one at John Day, the following year. It was at this time that the two year high school was established. This school was taught by H. C. Mack and the first class was graduated in 1905. The graduation class consisted of Willa Williams, Anna Olp, Ernest Kimberling, Cora Johnson, William Howell and Ellen Laurance.

In 1912, the four-year high school was established with Avis McHaley as the only graduate in 1913. In 1914, the only graduate was Garland Ross. The following year, there were eight graduates.

In 1914, Manual Training was added to the curriculum. This corresponds to the Mechanical Drawing we have today.

In 1916, the first part of the present school building, which is the old section constructed of brick, was built. The chemistry and domestic science departments were established with the completion of this building. This same year, the high school was standardized and accredited, (no graduates), as the pupils were now compelled to take the full four-year course instead of crowding it into three years as they had been doing until this time. In 1917, teachers' training was added to the curriculum but was discontinued after a year or two. In the year 1920, the Agriculture Department with Paul H. Crouter as the instructor, was established. This department was discontinued in 1923. In 1927, it was decided to alternate on a semester basis, the course domestic science and the new course of domestic art. Then in 1928, an electric range was purchased for the Domestic Science Dep't. This was progress!

In 1930, the residents of Bates and Austin requested bus transportation for the high school students living there. The route was established in September, 1930, and the Bates-Austin bus was bought to run this route. This same year, the contract for construction of the gym (old) was let to N. B. Leshner, Inc., and the gym was opened in February of 1931, with a large Chamber of Commerce banquet.

At this time the Manahan district, (located near the Ernie Ricco ranch), was discontinued and land from this was divided up between districts 4, 14, and 51. In 1931, patrons from Riverside and Meador districts, (both located east of Prairie City on the Logan Valley roads), asked that bus service be made available to them. In September, 1931, this route was established up the river as far as the Eastman Ranch, about 8 miles east of Prairie City. In 1933, Girls' athletics was discontinued, and in 1935, the Girls' League was established. This organization was very active in its first year of existence.

Things were pretty much the same for the next decade or so. In 1951, the addition of six new rooms was begun. By the fall of 1952, these new classrooms were ready for use to accommodate the ever-growing number of grade school children.

During the next ten years, the number of high school students rose steadily. In 1963, a large addition was built on the high school to accommodate the growing enrollment. At this time, 1967, the high school numbers 112 students, and the grade school has a total of 215.

Some of the people who have served as principal of the school, more or less in order, are: R. D. Williams, C. G. Mack, H. C. Mack, C. J. Mackintosh, Mr. Sheets, D. W. Boitnott, F. S. Crowley, F. B. Bennett, I. A. Mathers, T. L. Meador, E. K. Gentle, Mathew R. Thompson, Phil H. Putnam, Theodore H. Lang, Frank Buru, Charles R. Wishard, G. E. Bright, James C. Deeney, Chester L. Ward, Edwin C. Holmquist, Leonard L. Pate and Bob L. Periman.