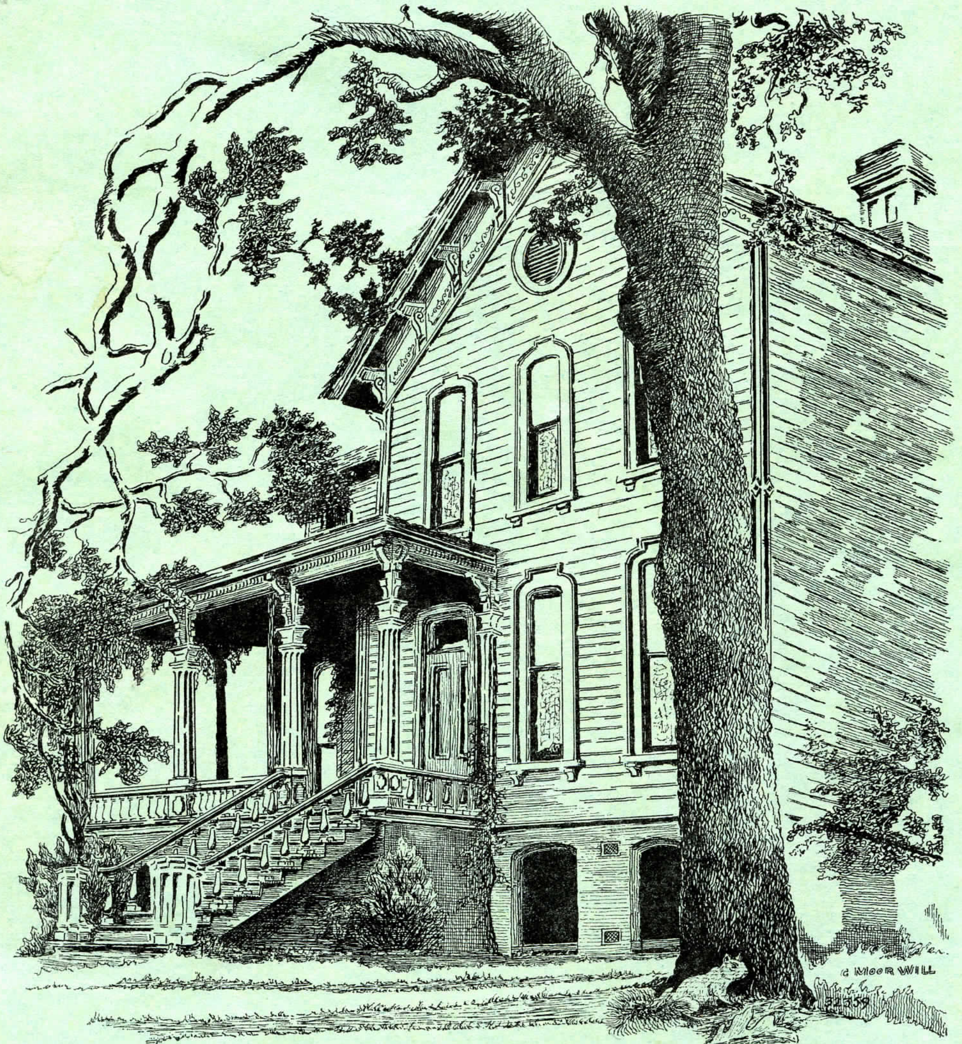
Marion County HISTORY

CENTENNIAL EDITION



MARION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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communities, a good book could be written based on the yarns spun around the old fashioned pot-bellied stove. It was the gathering spot for most of the male population. There the events of the day, as heralded on the posters within the shelter of the old covered bridge, could be discussed and analyzed. Nostalgic memories flood the minds and hearts of those who were fortunate enough to have enjoyed the sociability of a "snitch" from the cracker barrel as the leading citizens of the era swapped philosophies.

Almost as important as the people of Silverton was Wolfard's dog, Old Bob. Of nondescript heritage vaguely resembling a hairless, overfed terrier, Old Bob was as familiar on Silverton's streets as the citizens. Though not the object of too much affection from anyone, Old Bob held a place in the community as long as he lived. According to Davenport's story, he died "leaning toward a cat," having long since ceased to be able to even cause any alarm to the feline population.

Convinced that the town needed a means of making itself heard throughout the county, a group of men, with and without musical talent, decided to form a brass band which would tell one and all of the glories of the little town on the banks of Silver Creek. Because of the distance some of the members had to travel, attendance at rehearsals was poor and part of the "charm" of the music came from the musicians' not always being in accord with one another. Resplendent uniforms in the height of fashion for such groups were obtained and the band was much in demand for many public performances. Indeed they could almost have been said to be the Western counterparts of McNamarra's famous aggregation. The least that could be said was that their hearts were in their activities even if the end result was not always up to expectations.

Silverton, like many small towns, had its beginning with the concerted efforts of many humble but dedicated people. They laid a foundation of community pride and loyalty which remains today as strong as ever. In 1954, when Silverton celebrated the Centennial Anniversary of its formal founding, all joined to make the celebration one that would have swelled with pride the hearts of those who lived in and were a part of the little town that was born beneath the majestic oak on the banks of Silver Creek so many years before.

Historical Notes On Chemawa Indian School

MARY J. MITCHELL

Almost as old as Oregon is the Chemawa Indian School, the oldest continuously operated Indian boarding school in the United States. Originally it was known as the Indian Training and Normal School, later briefly as Harrison Institute and now simply as Chemawa Indian School. It is one of several large, off-reservation boarding schools maintained by the Federal Government in compliance with treaties made with the Indians almost a hundred years ago. More than 15,000 students have passed through its doors, in some cases three generations of the same family. This school has been responsible for most of the Indian education of Northwest tribes and Alaskan natives.

When the first Europeans came to the Northwest, they found numerous tribes. Most who were residents of the states of Washington and Oregon were living in settled communities. Because of the mild climate, the bounty of the land, the necessities of life were easily obtained. This left time for leisure and the development of a rich culture, original arts and crafts and an intricate social

structure. We shall not dwell on the years of misunderstanding and bloodshed which followed the coming of the first settlers.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a semblance of peace had been established. The Army, following procedure used in other areas, detailed an officer to establish a training school for Indians. At this time the Bureau of Indian Affairs was closely associated with the military. Evidently there was much correspondence during the year 1879 concerning a school in Oregon. Several mission schools had been established but could not fill the need. To this end Lt. M. C. Wilkinson, an officer of the Third Infantry, was detailed to set up such a school. He was able to lease land at Forest Grove for the purpose. The first correspondence we have of this transaction is a telegram to Lt. Wilkinson from E. A. Hayt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C., dated November 11, 1879: "Office grants you $5,000 for first year, but 25 children must be educated instead of 12."

This short communication would indicate that prior to this time funds had been requested. On February 25, 1880, Lt. Wilkinson sent the following telegram to the Secretary of Interior: "School under way 18 boys and girls more ready to come need balance appropriation this fiscal year."

An early report records that a Mr. Boynton was the principal teacher and a Mrs. Huffman was the matron. Four days after the start of classes, February 29, 1880, Lt. Wilkinson sent the following report to the Indian Commissioner in Washington, D. C., concerning the project: "Concerning Indian vocational and normal school, Forest Grove, Oregon. This school was opened February 25 with 18 scholars 14 boys and 4 girls. The first session of school was February 26. Much is to be done in preparing the ground about the school but this will give manual labor for the boys until shops are built and the season for making gardens comes. The girls will assist the matron in preparing the home. It is understood that this school when finally organized will be of the same nature of Carlisle Barracks. The children are from the Puyallup reservation, Puget Sound all excepting one Nesqually boy. The winter has been so severe that it has been impossible to gather a large number of Indians. Twelve weeks covers the time from the commencement of building until the school was opened. The main building is 32x60 two stories with kitchen and woodshed. Altogether the school opened encouragingly: children happy and contented working and studying heartily."

The names of the first eighteen students to enroll were: David Brewer, Nugen Kautz, Charles Ashure, Katie James, Edmund Richard, Henry Sicade, Augustus Kautz, Samuel Ashure, Annie Porter, Jerry Meeker, Willie Milton, Samuel McCaw, Emma Kalama, Andrew Richard, Peter Starrup, Harry Taylor, Julia Taylor, and Peter Kalama.

Lt. Wilkinson, now promoted to Captain, continued in charge of the school until 1883. At this time he rejoined his regiment and was killed near Ft. Snelling during a Chippewa uprising. It is paradoxical that he should die at the hands of one of a race he had spent so much effort in helping.

The school continued to grow and much progress was made. A newspaper of 1885 stated that during the spring the buildings at Forest Grove had burned and a new location was being sought to establish the school. After a careful survey the school was moved to the Willamette Valley, five miles north of Salem, on a plot of ground above old Lake Labish. In 1885 the Oregon Legislature approved the purchase of 375 acres of land by the Federal Government to be used as the site of the Indian Training School. Chemawa is supposedly a Chemeketa word meaning "Happy Home."

On March 17, 1885, Mr. David Brewer with a group of forty-six boys left Forest Grove and came to Chemawa by way of Portland. They cleared the land and put up buildings. As soon as possible gardens were started. All through the summer work progressed. Meanwhile in

the spring of 1885 the first class had been graduated from a five-year course of study. Commencement exercises were held at Forest Grove, Oregon. At this time Rev. H. J. Minthorn was the superintendent; he was later to become known as the uncle with whom, in Salem, Herbert Hoover spent some of his formative years.

By the fall of 1885 the new buildings at Chemawa were ready and classes started October 1, 1885. The buildings were comfortable two-story structures. Water had to be carried and the buildings were lighted with kerosene lamps and lanterns and heated by wood stoves.

In 1886 the enrollment had grown to 200, and the first class at the new school at Chemawa graduated in the spring of 1886. Evidently the school was gaining considerable interest in the Northwest.

The program of education offered the Indians was popular with Indians and Whites. The Indian was being fitted to live a better life while industries in the Northwest were finding a supply of well-trained workers. It is worthwhile quoting here an article which appeared in *The Pacific Rural Press,* December 15, 1888.

Class of 1886

"Our engraving affords material for interesting studies in physiognomy. It represents a recent graduating class at an Oregon institution for the improvement of the Indian, known as the Indian Training School which is located in Marion County four miles north of Salem.

"It was organized by Capt. Wilkinson, a philanthropic gentleman belonging to the army, who was detailed from that body for this purpose. The old school buildings were destroyed by fire in 1885, and thus nearly 200 children, big, little and old, were homeless. Just where to go or what to do, none knew.

"It was finally decided to locate the school at Chemawa, and equip the undertaking more elaborately and in keeping with the name and position of a Government like ours. The school grew and flourished abundantly under its first

president, Rev. Mr. Minthorn and Prof. Coffin, principal teacher. The school has now been in successful operation at its present location for three years, with Prof. John Lee as superintendent. There are now 180 Indians in attendance from various tribes, representing in all 29 different tribes from all along our coast, from Alaska to California, and from Montana to Oregon. There are 72 girls and 108 boys. The school is limited to 200, and much difficulty is encountered in keeping up this standard of attendance. The pupils are taught in four grades, boys and girls together, as in the public schools. The studies of the fourth grade or highest grade are arithmetic, grammar, physical geography, Child's Book of Nature, and History of the United States. They are constantly going and coming. They are a prey to homesickness. The restraints of the school, its surroundings and all, are most burdensome and overwhelmingly oppressive to the Indian, and in desperation he seeks relief and freedom in 'running away.'

"The boys are instructed in trades and labor, many of them showing no little skill in the use of tools. They are taught shoemaking, cabinet making, blacksmithing and wagon making.

"The girls are taught housework and needlework, and by the supervision of superintendents do the sewing, cooking, washing and ironing and mending for all the little children of the school.

"When first brought from their native woods and wilds, they show a decided dislike for all rules, regulations and usages of the school. They stand around and maintain a stolid quiet, refuse to talk or answer questions, are sullen and stubborn, show indifference to all things. By observation and force of example they are led little by little to 'fall in line.' They take most readily to the military drill and fall in at the call of a bugle.

"Persons are admitted to the school from 7-30 years of age, and are kept in school six years or more if necessary. At present the youngest child is six years old and among the adults the oldest is 40." Seventeen students graduated in the class of 1886 from Chemawa.

As more buildings were built, the number of students increased. New shops were added and new trades taught such as tailoring, home nursing, metal shops. Additional land was purchased for the farm, and the school became almost self-supporting in producing its own food. Students spent one half day in academic work and the other half in job training. So successful was this program and so skilled the workers who left the school, that great interest was attracted in Salem. A newspaper article of 1906 cites the splendid progress being made in the training of Indian youth for useful work. It continues that the success of the program and increased number of students enrolled seems to justify the Jason Lee philosophy of education.

In 1907, the Oregon Attorney General ruled that Chemawa Indian School and all lands pertaining thereto were exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, thus making the school a federal area. A cannery had been added to the school as well as a harness making shop and dress making.

Despite the fact that Indians were not drafted in World War I, many of the Chemawa students volunteered. The roster of those serving in the armed forces is a long one and their record brilliant. Their military drill at Chemawa stood them in good stead. Old hatreds and suspicions vanished in the combat for a common cause.

By 1922 the land area of the school had increased to 426 acres. Some of the land was purchased by the students and donated to the school as a token of their gratitude. Most of the money was earned picking hops. Orchards were set out. Sixty-five buildings had been erected, mostly white frame, two story structures, and the ground had been landscaped. The enrollment had grown to nearly a thousand students from six states and Alaska.

However, all was not work and study. There were varied social activities. There was a band, numerous literary societies, drill teams, honor societies "for young ladies and gentlemen of the most circumspect conduct and character." A

report of this period follows: "Parties under the direction of the superintendent or a responsible person appointed by him are held regularly. The demeanor of the students on these occasions reflects credit on themselves and the school. A more civil and well-behaved group of young people would not be found anywhere."

The athletic teams had gained renown throughout the whole of the Pacific coast. The Chemawa teams played such teams as Stanford University, Multnomah College, University of Oregon, and Oregon State College. Ruben Sanders was known for his athletic prowess all over the United States. The athletic skill of Chemawa students has continued throughout the years to the present.

By 1922 the Chemawa Indian School had made such strides that it was advisable to expand the program. In this year the curriculum was enlarged, and fully accredited school grades 1-10 were set up for the enrollment of 1,100 students. Many of these were second and third generation, daughters, grandsons of the original enrollees. Likewise the plant had been expanded; there were 450 acres of rich farm land, 40 acres of campus beautifully landscaped, 70 buildings, all lighted with electricity and heated by steam heat. Two new brick dormitories had been added. The staff had been enlarged to 70 and the enrollees were from 14 tribes and Alaska. In 1927, Chemawa became a fully accredited four-year high school with an enrollment of 1,100 students. The high school program was an incentive for an increasing number of young Indian men and women to continue their studies in colleges or vocational courses. The tribes of the Northwest had a deep feeling for their school. To many, orphaned when young, Chemawa was indeed their Happy Home.

The depth of this school loyalty and love was manifest in 1932 when the celebration of Chemawa's birthday each February 25 became an institution continuing to the present. Families came from all parts of the Northwest to participate in dances, handicrafts, and programs which drew audiences from the whole Northwest. This has continued to be an event of cultural interest in Salem.

In the spring of 1933, in an economy move, the Congress cut the Indian Service budget to such extent that it was necessary to close the Chemawa Indian School. This blow appalled not only the Indians of the Northwest but citizens of Oregon who had watched its progress in the training of Indian youth and felt a deep attachment to the school. Because of the efforts of journalists of the state and Oregon Congressmen, especially Senators McNary and Cordon, the school was reopened in the fall of 1933 with an enrollment limited to 300 students, only a third of its former enrollment and one-fourth its potential capacity. Although the enrollment has grown slightly, it has never regained its potential of former years.

During World War II, the young men and women of Chemawa contributed their share in the national effort in the armed services and industry. The vocational skills acquired in the program now revealed the value of the school and its contribution not only to Indian life but also to national life. By now the third generation of the first Indians trained at Chemawa were enrolled, graduating and taking their places in the general current of American life. Because of the progress made by the Northwest Indians many of the children also were enrolling in public schools. Hence, the program again adjusted to fill the needs of Indian youth with special needs. Students from broken homes or those who had no educational facilities in the areas where they lived were admitted.

Early in 1950, the Indian Bureau reevaluated the use of the school. Chemawa had served the youth of the Northwest well. From the Southwest came the clamor for more educational facilities for the Navajo children. At this time there were some 16,000 students of school age on the Navajo reservation with no school facilities. It was decided to set up a Special Navajo Program at Chemawa in addition to the regular twelve-year academic program. A teacher with interpreter and small group of stu-

dents arrived, and the Special Five-Year Navajo Program was initiated.

From the first this program was a success, because of the cultural advantages offered by Salem and other Northwest cities and the tolerant social attitudes and work opportunities. Little by little the Navajo enrollment grew as enthusiastic students returned to spread word of Chemawa. Graduates were placed in productive work and readily assimilated into the Northwest communities.

In 1956, it was decided to drop the regular Northwest enrollment on the twelve-year program since only 150 students were enrolled. It was possible to place them in public schools or other Indian boarding schools which could meet their special needs. Thus the school became all Navajo. The enrollment for the year 1958-59 reached 756 students of whom 115 were graduated and placed on jobs or relocation.

Here follow the superintendents of the Chemawa Indian School: 1. M. C. Wilkinson (Feb. 1880 to Feb. 1883); 2. H. J. Minthorn (Feb. 1883 to Nov. 1884); 3. W. V. Coffin (Nov. 1884 to Sept. 1885); 4. John Lee (Oct. 1885 to Mar. 1889); 5. William Beadle (Mar. 1889 to Aug. 1889); 6. G. M. Irwin (Aug. 1889 to Mar. 1892); 7. C. W. Wasson (Apr. 1892 to Feb. 1894; 8. James Dickson (Feb. 1894 to Jun. 1894); 9. O. H. Parker (Jun. 1894 to Sept. 1894); 10. Charles Rakestraw (Sept. 1894 to Nov. 1894); 11. Edwin Chalcraft (Nov. 1894 to Mar. 1895); 12. Charles Rakestraw (Apr. 1895 to Nov. 1895); 13. Thomas Potter (Nov. 1895 to Sept. 1904); 14. Edwin Chalcraft (Oct. 1904 to Jun. 1912); 15. H. E. Wadsworth (Jun. 1912 to Jun. 1916; 16. Harwood Hall (Jul. 1916 to Mar. 1926); 17. James McGregory (Apr. 1926 to Sept. 1927); 18. Oscar Lipps (Oct. 1927 to Apr. 1931); 19. James Ryan (May 1931 to Aug. 1935); 20. Homer Morrison (Sept. 1935 to Dec. 1935); 21. Paul Jackson (Jan. 1936 to Mar. 1941); 22. Myrthus Evans (Mar. 1941 to Jun. 1943); 23. Russell Kelley (Jul. 1943 to Sept. 1951); 24. Martin Holm (Jan. 1952 to Mar. 1953); 25. Paul Bramlet (Mar. 1953 to Jul. 1954); and 26. Victor Hill (Sept. 1954 to date).

As the oldest federal boarding school in continuous operation and one of the largest, Chemawa Indian School has had a unique place in Oregon history. Through her doors have passed some 15,000 Indian youth. Her unique training program has provided Oregon with a reservoir of skilled workers and a stable group of citizens. The mutual respect, tolerance, cooperation, and progress of Indian and white in Oregon stand as a shining symbol of democratic achievement.

French Prairie Farm, 1839-1850

MARGARET J. BAILEY

[The following excerpts are from Mrs. Bailey's autobiographical *Grains, or Passages in the Life of Ruth Rover*, published by Carter and Austin of Portland in 1854, and now extremely rare. Ruth Rover is Mrs. Bailey herself; Dr. Binney is her husband, Dr. William J. Bailey.]

It must be considered that Oregon was not in those days as now. There were not at hand those magazines of goods which can be found in many towns in Oregon, where a bride may array herself "in style." Or if there had been, we know not if Ruth would have availed herself of any of these temptations, for she did not even dress as well as her limited wardrobe would have enabled her to do, for we see her standing at the altar in a *green merino* dress and a black and green handkerchief about her neck.

The only witness to the ceremony, besides the parson's family, declared he thought he was at a funeral . . .

'Twas an interesting sight, that wed-