

Clatskanie Braue

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THE CLATSKANIE PUBLIC SCHOOL IN RETROSPECT.

Written from data furnished by E. W. Conyers and others.

It does not seem possible that in 1853 the present site of Clatskanie was covered by a dense growth of trees. But this was what the first settler, a bachelor by the name of Isaac Wagoner, found in the spring of that year.

A few days after this, E. J. Bryant and his son, O:nar J. Bryant, arrived and took up a donation land claim and built their cabin on the point just above the Shaver Company's lower warehouse. They were closely followed by Orin Webb, Justice Jones, James Hill (alias Jas. Lynch), and H. B. Hastings. These men came, bringing their families, and took up land claims along the Clatskanie River, in and just above the present town of Clatskanie.

In the fall of 1854, these early settlers built a school house on the south bank of the Clatskanie River about one-half mile above the present town. Miss Jane Chapman was employed as teacher in this first pay or private school. The school was short lived. Only three months of school were held in this school house, for many of the settlers abandoned their claims in the spring of 1855.

Until 1857, Clatskanie was in the County of Clatsop. In that year the County of Columbia was formed, taking in a twelve-mile strip of Clatsop County which contained Clatskanie. The division of Columbia County into school districts the following spring gave Clatskanie—that is, District No. 5—the following boundaries: commencing at the mouth of Dobbin's Slough (about three miles below Rainier), running thence south to the county line, thence west on the county line to the southwest corner, thence north on the county line to the Columbia River, thence up the river to the place of beginning. In all this immense territory, the enumeration of children of school age made by E. W. Conyers at that time, resulted in only 17, as follows: John Fletcher Wood, Elliot Bond Wood, Benson Freemont Wood, Lucy Wood, George Barr, William Barr, James Barr, Elvira Bryan, Elihu Stout Bryant, John Conrad Pieper, Mary Elisabeth Pieper, Bethema Bradbury, Clarissa Bradbury, William Edward Ross, Charles Ross, Mary Ross and Mary Ellen Conyers.

The majority of the settlers were bachelors, who were opposed to organizing the district for school purposes, because of their lack of interest and the extra tax which would be levied. In 1859, when the first meeting was

held for organizing the district, they assembled in full force, purposing to defeat the measures proposed. After the chairman had been elected, Mr. Drury, one of the bachelors, moved that the meeting be adjourned, to meet in one year at his house (his house was situated at what is now Marshland). Of course the motion carried and there was no alternative for those desiring school, but to wait their time. At the end of one year, they all assembled in his house, and this same man, Mr. Drury, moved that they adjourn sine die. His motion was carried. After a consultation, those who desired school agreed that they would immediately post notices in three conspicuous (?) places where no one would see them. The bachelors discovered the plans, and those desiring school were able to organize the district only after they had promised that the extra tax upon the bachelors would be refunded.

Although the district was organized in 1861, it was not until 1869 that a public school was maintained. During the intervening period, a private school was held in the upstairs of E. W. Conyers' house, with Miss Monk as teacher. The following is one of the amusing incidents in connection with this school: Oliver Blood came to the house three days after school had started. Mr. Conyers said to him: "You have come to school, have you?" "Yes," he answered. After he was taken upstairs and introduced to the teacher, he asked, "Where is the school? I don't see it." The teacher explained that he was in the school; that it was right in that room. "Well," he said, "if this is school, I have seen it and now I am going home." The teacher told him that he could not go home; but when noon came he ran away and did not return for several days.

In 1869, Mr. Blood, Mr. E. S. Bryant and Mr. E. W. Conyers built the first public school house of material paid for by themselves. It was a 16x20 box house, furnished with hand-made desks, and heated by a large box stove. Chas. W. Stone taught six months of school that first year, and since that time there has always been school in this district. For years all public meetings were held in this building; the Grange, the Methodist Church and Sunday School were long represented here.

This building was used until 1880 when another school house was built on the Nehalem road. In 1891, upon the death of Mr. E. G. Bryant, his heirs carried out his expressed wish and donated a block of land to the district—the site of the present school building. The following year the old part of the building now standing was erected.

T. J. Cleeton, now Judge of Multnomah County, was the first principal in this new building. He was assisted by Mrs. Keasy, whose term was finished by Miss Mildred Boyle. The next principal, J. D. Hawes, was succeeded by Fred C. Whitten.

It was at this time that the High School was instituted. As the upstairs of the school house was not finished the first few weeks of school were held in Kratz's Hall. There were only seventeen pupils that year in the high school, Orville Merill being the only boy. They called themselves the "16 to 1" high school—"16 to 1" being the political issue of that year.

In 1906 an addition was placed on the school house to meet the needs

of the school. It has continued to grow. The last census shows three hundred fifty six children of school age.

A four-year high school course is now maintained. "The people can always have the kind of school they wish." The citizens of Clatskanie have always had a just pride in their school; it is due to their interest and support that it has reached its present standard.

Teachers from 1869 to 1880: Chas. W. Stone, Mr. Ayers, Mrs. W. H. Conyers, Rose Geiger, Clara Grieves, Mary Eaton, Cynthia English, David B. English, Maggie Groves.

Teachers from 1880 to 1892: Mr. Gordon, Gertrude Badger, Mrs. N. D. Tichenor, Robert Hatton, Mr. Wood.

Principals since 1892: T. J. Cleton, J. D. Hawes, Frederic C. Whitten, Hugh B. Esson, J. H. Collins, Geo. W. Murphy.

Teachers since 1892: Miss Lyton, Mrs. Keasy, Abby Bryant, Myrtle Frost Jones, L. May Reid, Katherine Tracy, Maud Cole, Zella Lewis, Olive Harris, Miss Overholtzer, Jessie Brown, W. A. Hall, Charles Hall, Mary Tichenor, Annette Morton, Mrs. Hodgkins, Mrs. Gertude Collins, Anna Blair, Ada Stevens, Juliette Parramore, Lulu Smith, Lucy Howell, Mrs. Fanny McDonald, Gertrude Holmes, Eleanore Prouty, Mildred Frost, Fern Johnson, Mrs. Bertha Barr, Mrs. Sarah C. Schneider, Gertude Weed, Neva Kyser, Harriet Baker, Mrs. Mary Greene.



The School House erected 1892



School House Erected 1869