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Oscar E. Gladish
1897-1980

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Table of Contents

In this issue we again pay tribute to early educators. In particular, we pay tribute to Oscar Gladdish to whom we dedicate the following pages.

Page

Oscar E. Gladish, Principal of Pullman High School, 1929-1963 by George A. Frykman 3

Early Schools in Whitman County by Deborah Gallacci and William F. Wilbert 7

Colfax College and English's Collegiate School: Examples of early higher education in the Palouse by Marvin G. Slind 20

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Oscar E. Gladish, Principal of Pullman High School, 1929-1963

by George A. Frykman

As the preparations for graduation at Pullman High School were being made in the spring of 1963 a special note of nostalgia and emotion entered into the festivities. Oscar E. Gladish was retiring after 34 years as principal and teacher of United States history and government. During the ceremonies, the student Executive Council presented him with a scrapbook filled with letters from graduates he had taught over the years. Amid congratulations and notes filled with thanks for his enlightened direction of student government and inspirational teaching of American history, one alumnus characterized Gladish in the following terms:

> He's got Teddy Roosevelt's ruggedness, Woodrow Wilson's idealism, and Oscar E. Gladish's wit. He knows more about John Wilkes Booth, Ma Surrat and the boys than anybody I have ever known. He can silence an assembly faster than a gun-blast, walk across town in double-time, and sign his name more times in less time than anybody I know. And besides all this he is a lawyer. (Jerry Blum to Gladish, May 23, 1963, in Scrapbook, "To Mr. Gladish from the Executive Council, 1963," in Gladish Collection)

Wendell Barbee, president of the Student Council and member of the Class of 1947, wrote more moderately but equally cogently, when he assessed Gladish's handling of student government. He stated that the principal's adroitness in such matters enabled persons like himself to learn a great deal about American politics, freedom, and justice. That such thoughts were not mere sentimentalism was supported by Dennis Morrison, School Board president, at the 1963 Commencement when he summed up a widespread feeling that "Gladish's secret was his strong belief in the 'worth of the individual.'" (**Pullman Herald,** June 13, 1963).

Thirty years of service to a single community meant that Gladish had survived—and perhaps surmounted—the Great Depression, the Second World War, and eight high school generations of students. He was proud of the success of his graduates at Washington State University, which on one occasion he attributed to the generally high cultural level of families and communities in the college town. But Gladish never bowed to the popular fashions of permissiveness in school and society or to the supposed interest of the college community in intellectualism. At his retirement he stated that "the virtues of honesty, integrity, dependability, and faithfulness are more important than scholarship in the eyes of employers and others searching students' records at Pullman High School." He also criticized the progressive educational philosophy

when he described public schools as providing an "artificial situation" rather than real life and suggested that the home ought to impart more education than was the case. (Undated clipping from the **Pullman Herald,** Gladish Collection).

Gladish's resoluteness in supporting what might be termed a traditionalist's political and educational philosophy throughout his career can be traced to his childhood. Though he was born near Higginsville Junction, Missouri, on September 20, 1897, when he was three years old the family moved to Fruitland, Idaho, on the Snake River near Payette and the Oregon border. He grew up on a farm, walking two miles every day to a two-room school that served him until high school graduation. In old age he recalled roaming through the sagebrush hunting rabbits more readily than he remembered his schooling. Indeed, he absorbed thoroughly the lore of the frontier while exploring that sparsely settled region. On one occasion he discovered an Indian skull and later unearthed a decaying musket and a pair of skeletons which seemed to corroborate a local legend about fighting between the earlier settlers and the Indians. Hunting remained a passion throughout his life but perhaps his equally deep interest in American history arose from that early archeological experience.

In 1918, Glasish enlisted in the United States Navy but spent only six months as an apprentice seaman before his discharge when the First World War ended. In September, 1919, he entered Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. As an earnest young man of serious mien he sought proofs for his religious beliefs in the tiny Baptist institution of fewer than 250 students. Though he later reported that he failed to find the proofs it is clear that he was not devastated by the lack of religious consolation.

Oak Leaves, 1922, the yearbook for Linfield in his junior year, reveals that he was a leader in intercollegiate debating and with a partner defeated the senior class in inter-class debates. He also sang in the college glee club and belonged to Delta Psi Delta, the fraternity that led all other societies in scholastic achievement but also promoted good times, entertaining "lady friends" at a banquet in the winter and a picnic in the spring. When Gladish graduated with the Bachelor of Philosophy degree in history in 1923, he left college with his faith in traditional values largely intact (except perhaps for religious values), a concept supported by the claim of his fraternity that it stood "squarely for Christian character and all around manhood" and that it believed "that the interests of Linfield College came first, before those of fraternity."

He had hoped to enter law studies immediately at the University of Oregon, but because of a lack of funds, taught school in Apple Valley, near Parma, Idaho, from 1923 to 1925, becoming superintendent before the first year was over. On May 30, 1925, he married Janet Riley, daughter of the president of Linfield College, and they moved to Springfield, Oregon, near Eugene, from which he commuted by bicycle to law school classes at the University of Oregon. After two years, in 1927, he again took up teaching for lack of funds, this time finding a position at Springfield High School.

Sometime in the next two years Gladish must have made up his mind to dedicate himself to education and to make the law a secondary interest, for in 1929 he became principal of the high school in Pullman, Washington, and teacher of history and government. When school opened on Monday, September 9, 1929, Gladish greeted 290 high school students and found himself administering classes in three buildings, including a red brick structure built at the turn of the century, a second section dating from about 1912, and a gymnasium wing which was being rushed to completion that month. Seventh and eighth grade classes were located in the new wing but they were not Gladish's responsibility.

His tenure took an auspicious turn two weeks later at the Senior Reception when he sang two solos and led community singing of Southern songs. His triumph of the evening was assured when he engaged in a watermelon eating contest with another new teacher and won the prize. There was no mistaking the seriousness of his purpose, however, when on December 1, 1929, **The Hi Times,** the student newspaper, reported that Gladish had assigned his American history class the task of investigating and writing about the division of powers in the federal government because textbooks treated "only the surface of the matters and times under study, while the purpose of these reports is to go deeper into the problems and teach the students to work out historical questions."

His love for the law, far from dying, became perhaps the chief element in his philosophy of school administration. He continued his law studies, finally obtaining the Bachelor of Laws degree from La Salle Extension University in 1950. Meanwhile, he tried to instill a strong sense of responsibility in the students regarding the conduct of their own affairs. It was not enough to enforce proper decorum at school dances and in the halls between classes—although good behavior was firmly insisted upon at all times—it was necessary to practice democratic behavior and to honor constitutional principals.

Gladish's leadership became significant when he discovered a $600 deficit in the athletic fund and announced that the sports program would cease if the matter was not rectified. The students promptly raised the money by means of a variety show; the debt was wiped out, and the ground work laid for what became a kind of federal governmental system in miniature. All students were members of the Pullman High School Student Association and as such elected a Student Council which met weekly and made decisions regarding student activities, as defined under a constitution. To provide additional discussion on important issues and to stimulate interest in student affairs ranging from finances to improvement of school spirit, a larger body called The Forum was elected from the home rooms. In addition, all students met once a week as the committee of the whole—never more than 600 students in Gladish's years—to discuss and criticize reports from both the Student Council and The Forum. Unless he chose deliberately to avoid the student government, no student was without a voice in its proceedings. Active participation, on the other hand, provided intensive exercises in public speaking and realistic training in political action almost immediately applicable in politics at the city and higher levels.

Support for democratic practice did not handicap the principal if circumstances called for vigorous and aggressive action. Robert Castleberry, president of the senior class in 1965, recalled that students "shivered" in their seats at an assembly while Gladish bawled them out because someone had written ugly words on the walls of the men's lavatory. But Castleberry also remembered that when making a Lincoln's day speech a few years before Gladish had "kept our attention for 60 minutes, and that is a lot for 600 students." **(Pullman Herald,** June 17, 1965).

Some of Gladish's finest hours as a teacher came when he addressed the student body on Lincoln's birthday, which he did on numerous occasions. Castleberry might well have been referring to his speech of February 12, 1962, entitled "The Man for the Ages." In it Gladish treated Lincoln with the reverence and awe which represented the popular view of the martyred president who had given his last breath to save the Union. Lincoln, in fact, epitomized for Gladish his own deep faith in individualism, self-sufficiency, and triumph through perserverance and hard work, especially as found in the Gettysburg and Second Inaugural addresses. Not only did Lincoln prove to be

intellectually and emotionally great—perhaps greatest in American history—but he provided the perfect model for students. Gladish hoped "they might profit by the example of Abraham Lincoln." (The speech, recorded on tape, is in the Gladish Collection).

The Lincoln speeches reflect a deep faith that the teacher's chief obligation was to pass to the younger generation a keen appreciation for the values of an older American. Teaching primarily by the lecture method, with questions and discussion also used, he imparted his precepts of individualism, patriotism, the primacy of rule of law, and the necessity for democracy to students who were surprisingly receptive. His law studies, of course, deepened his own understanding of American life and made him a more perceptive teacher, but so did his graduate studies at Washington State University which culminated in 1932 with a Masters of Arts degree in Political Science. His career both as administrator and teacher was marked by the desire to "educate the child so that he would become a man," according to Willard Barnes, his teaching colleague from 1956 to 1964, who also recalled that Gladish respected differences in method and teaching strategies of all colleagues who sought his same broad ends. (Barnes' responses to questions raised by the author in letter of October 15, 1980).

Gladish's retirement was filled with public service and continued adherence to lifelong values and activities. His wife's death in 1967 plunged him into a despondency from which he escaped when unexpectedly appointed as mayor in 1969 to fill out an unexpired term. Subsequently he served a full term from 1969 to 1973. He continued his practice of serving on numerous civic organizations ranging from those designed to protect the environment to others seeking to serve the community hospital or protect the right of citizens to bear arms. The School Board accorded him perhaps the highest mark of distinction and gratitude available when, on April 20, 1972, it named the building in which he had served for so long the "Gladish Middle School."

Vigorous in health, he joyfully practiced the rugged life by hunting "varmints" on the breaks of the Snake and in the channeled scablands almost until his death which occured August 16, 1980.

Sources used in this article: *The Whitman County Historical Society has acquired the Gladish Collection, consisting of speeches, letters, pictures, books, and a variety of artifacts representing Oscar Gladish's achievements. These materials are fragmentary and sparse but of some use. Several issues of the* ***Pullman Herald*** *have been used. An Interview of Gladish conducted by Mary Bristow on April 16, 1978, and found in the Whitman County Historical Society Oral History Collection was used, along with Wylie Johnston, "Oscar Gladish: Rationalist, Principal, First Teacher," manuscript in the Washington State University Archives; Pullman High School,* ***Information Bulletin,*** *issued for 1936-1940 and 1942-1943, found in the WSU Archives; Obituary and Editorial,* ***Pullman Herald,*** *August 20, 1980; and Willard Barnes' answers to my questions in a letter of October 15, 1980, which are in my possession.*

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Early Schools In Whitman County

by Deborah Gallacci and William F. Wilbert

In his February 28, 1854 message to the first meeting of the territorial legislature in Olympia, Governor Isaac Stevens made it clear to his reform and expansionist-minded audience that under his administration, education would be accorded high priority:

> The subject of education already occupies the minds and hearts of the citizens of this territory, and I feel confident that they will aim at nothing less than to provide a system, which shall place within the means of all, the full development of the capacities with which he has been endowed.

Stevens envisioned that "the school, the college, the university" would one day be available to every citizen of a future state and he recommended "that a special commission be instituted to report on the whole school system." The territorial legislature, following the governor's instructions, went to work, creating in short order a Committee on Education empowered to draft "an act establishing a common school system in the Territory of Washington." This act was made law on April 12, 1854. It provided for the election of county superintendents, guidelines for the creation of school districts, requirements for the certification of teachers, a school fund accruing from the sale of public lands, and an annual tax of two mills to be levied by each county for teachers' salaries. At this time, however, the entire population of Washington Territory did not excede 4,000 people and the proposed "school system" existed largely on paper. In fact only a handful of public schools existed in the whole territory, all of them located west of the Cascades. The energetic Governor Stevens was soon distracted from educational concerns by more pressing matters such as a possible transcontinental railroad to Puget Sound and impending "Indian troubles." Although he was fully convinced of the feasibility of his plans, Stevens could scarcely have imagined at the time that all of his dreams for education in the territory as a whole would one day be realized within Whitman County.

The Education Act of 1854 had little impact on sparsely populated eastern Washington for many years. When stockmen from the vicinity of Walla Walla and farmers from the Willamette Valley first began to settle the Palouse region, they were by and large left to their own designs when it came to providing schools for their children. By the time Whitman County was established in 1871, small farming communities had developed and families began creating temporary schools in their own homes or easily available buildings. Often this meant the local church, such as Elberton's United Brethren Church, which housed pupils until a school could be built.

Such schools were taught by those deemed most qualified by community members, and who could spare the time. School terms varied widely and had to be worked into farming schedules. For example, James Elliot, a farmer and early teacher in the St. John area, held school in his own home, usually beginning after harvest.

When homes and churches were unavailable, more primative structures were used. A **Harper's New Monthly Magazine** travel article published in 1882 describes a summer school held in a cave, "Nature's temple of learning," on the Snake River. Though this may have been an extreme case, other schools were taught in only slightly less primordial surroundings. The first classes in the Tekoa area were taught by Harry Warner in his dirt-floored woodshed in 1883, and Sarah Hughes instructed eight pupils in her homestead cabin near Palouse starting in 1874. Many homesteaders with an abundance of school-age children built their own makeshift schoolhouses. A man named Baker homesteading near St. John constructed a log school in 1875 and hired a teacher for his five daughters, thus creating what later became District 62, Baker School. Some areas embarked on more ambitious projects by initiating subscription schools such as the Union Seminary in Palouse, built in 1876. But more often than not the earliest schools relied largely on donations.

These temporary schools were sporadically attended by a growing number of farm children and as the population grew they became the basis for public school districts. Six to ten heads of households would petition the county superintendent for a school district, then these original petitioners would usually become the district's first board of directors. They would oversee the construction and outfitting of the schoolhouse, employ a teacher, and even take turns administering discipline to unruly students. In this manner the first public school district in Whitman County was formed in 1871 in Colfax. By the next year there were five school districts but still only two schoolhouses. Total attendance for the county was 45 pupils. By 1883 these figures had jumped to 69 school districts, 48 schoolhouses and 1,754 pupils. Most of these were ungraded primary schools taught by one teacher, and they were usually held in one-room frame buildings in isolated farming hamlets. Water was hauled from wells and school furnishings and supplies were minimal.

Though publicly funded, these rudimentary school districts were still largely the result of community cooperation. District 94, Alki School, near St. John was built in 1886 when land was donated by a local man named John Eaton. F. A. McNall, who had nine children, hauled lumber and other building materials from Sprague, and a local carpenter, Ukiah Munson, supervised the construction of the building. Soon this and other school buildings became, along with local churches, major symbols of community cohesion. In winter months when school was not in session, literary programs were held in which students, teachers and parents gave recitations and debated topics of current interest. The schoolhouse also provided the stage for holiday programs and fund-raising social events of various kinds such as basket socials to buy school books, a flag pole, or whitewash the fence.

As more settlers flocked into the fertile Palouse country in the 1890s, existing school districts were divided into smaller units to meet the needs of the increasing number of families. District 133, Enterprise School, is a case in point. In 1891 local families petitioned to the county superintendent to form a new district from parts of three existing districts in the area. The petition was granted and the heads of the families, acting as the board of directors, voted to bond the district $500 in order to build and furnish a school. The next year the board decided on a location and contracted with a school supply company for furnishings and supplies; a local man

—Paul T. Bockmier Collection, Whitman County Historical Society.
A fine example of an early one-room school. The first public school in Garfield, built around 1880. This building was torn down in 1928.

donated the building materials for the schoolhouse; a five mill tax was levied on assessed property of the district for school operating expenses; and in 1892 the school opened. On the other hand, community disagreement, rather than cooperation, was also a method of creating new schools. For example, the families of the earliest Wilada School had such a dispute which culminated in the construction of a new school in 1902.

Despite the grass-roots nature and tendency towards independent administration in early Whitman County schools, district formation became more uniform by the 1880s. In addition to establishing standardized school district administration, the Territorial Education Law of 1877 made school attendance compulsory for children between eight and sixteen, provided for annual school levies, and implemented graded schools. Unlike the Law of 1854, it was created by a firmly established territorial government which had the power to enforce compliance with its regulations and the money to fund school district administration.

Once districts and schools got going the question of regular school terms arose. Early schools usually had two- or three-month terms in the fall and spring, thereby leaving all hands free for harvest as well as avoiding the bad travelling conditions of mid-winter. It was not until the turn of the century that schools began to be held for two four-month terms more closely approximating our present nine-month school year.

Around this time graded primary schools became more numerous, school structures grew more substantial, and several towns (Colfax, St. John, Palouse, and others) had high schools. Many farm children completed primary school in their rural communities, then boarded in a nearby town while attending high school. In **Growing Up in the Palouse,** for example, J. B. West tells of his experience in boarding in Palouse while attending Palouse High School. More and more the one-room frame school building began to give way to two-story structures, often of brick and with several rooms. Following this trend, District 82 in Tekoa replaced its one-room school with a large two-story frame schoolhouse in 1891 which served the first through tenth grades,

and in 1907 a two-story brick high school was built. Eleven years later a gym, assembly hall, library, and offices were added.

All over the country during the latter part of the 19th Century the increasing concentration of population in towns and cities created a decrease in enrollment in many small rural school districts and the long process of school consolidation began. As farms became larger and the agricultural output of Whitman County increased, fewer people remained in rural areas. Towns increased in size as more supportive services and businesses became necessary and town school districts began to absorb the rural districts. District 9 in Palouse is a good example. In 1912, Palouse's grade school and high school totalled a mere 65 students. By 1928 consolidation began when the Turnbow and Daily schools merged with the Palouse district. These were followed by the Angell, Skeen and Four Mile Schools ten years later; then parts of the Eden Valley, Albion, and Pitt schools in 1946.

Of course there was resistance in some areas since many rural communities were reluctant to sacrifice local control of education for the sake of consolidation. Consolidation, no matter what benefits it could offer in terms of funding and school facilities, threatened a major unifying factor in the community—the locally-governed schoolhouse. The people of District 62, Baker School, reacted against consolidation, voting three times to stop a proposed merger with the St. John district before finally relenting in 1930. Likewise District 119, Lower Downing, rejected consolidation twice before the Reorganization of School Districts Legislative Act of 1941 resulted in the absorption of Lower Downing, Lancaster, and Kamiache Schools into the St. John district. By 1941 there were only 60 school districts in the county, as compared to a high of more than 150 districts in 1915.

The First Teachers and How They Lived

As the schoolhouse and school districts changed over the years, so too did the profession of teaching. The first teachers in Whitman County were farmers and farmers' wives who agreed to teach the children of their area, often for only a small fee, and usually without formal teaching credentials. But when permanent schools were built certified teachers were sought. High school graduates could obtain certificates upon the successful completion of state teachers exams provided for under the Educational Act of 1877. These exams required prospective teachers to answer detailed questions on Arithmetic, Orthography (spelling), Physiology, Educational Theory, U.S. History, Grammar, Geography, State School Law, Reading, Algebra, Physics, and Literature. By the early 20th Century many teachers felt obliged to complete one-year teacher training programs at state normal schools and some even obtained Life Certificates after three years of college courses. Additional instruction, as mandated by the Law of 1877, was given to all teachers in the county at monthly teacher training institutes.

Despite this training and the traditional status and respect accorded the profession, teachers were paid low wages. Female teachers usually received lower salaries than males and during times of economic depression in agriculture (notably in the 1890s and 1920s) married women were refused teaching jobs. In 1883 the average salary paid male teachers in Whitman county was $41 per month, while women received $32.

Salaries were extremely variable, however, and the rate of turnover was high. A school district with limited funds was compelled out of financial necessity to hire those who would work for the lowest salaries, and this often meant women. Most rural school districts employed only one teacher and it was unusual for him or her to stay for

more than a year or two. Contracts were offered for only a three-month term and many times would not be renewed for a variety of reasons—the teacher found a better paying teaching job, married, or went into another line of work; or the district found a more suitable or less expensive candidate. For example, the Enterprise School hired J. G. Edwards for a three-month term in 1893 for $50 per month. The next year they hired Miss Mary Buck for the same amount. In 1895 Mr. Edwards was re-hired, but this time for only $30 per month and without room and board. Over the next few years several other teachers were hired with pay rising and falling between $40 and $47. Adding to the problem of teacher turnover was the short school year, sometimes as brief as three or four months, which inspired many teachers to seek more regular and reliable employment elsewhere. This dilemma of attracting and keeping good teachers was expressed by County Superintendent J. C. Laurence in 1883 in his annual report to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction:

> While we have number of excellent teachers, several of the best ones have left us for fields and pastures new, where they would be better appreciated and better paid for their services.

Laurence's solution to the problem is often echoed by today's educational administrators: an increase in school support funds and better salaries for teachers.

The life of early Whitman County school teachers was one of almost continual disruption and a teacher's future seemed forever in doubt. Since job changes were so frequent, teachers became of necessity "itinerant pedagogues," moving from place to place nearly every year. The early teaching career of Gladys Hamilton Cobb, a 1912 St. John High School graduate, illustrates the mobility of teachers at that time. Her first job was for the Upper Rock Lake District in 1912-1913. The next school year she taught at Thornton; then at the University of Idaho for a year. Thereafter she spent three years teaching at St. John between 1915 and 1918, followed by a year at Bellingham Normal School, and three years at Ketchikan, Alaska.

There were other anxiety-laden problems as well, some of which were beyond the realm of human control. At any time teachers were likely to have their sessions suddenly abbreviated or cancelled altogether, as during the crop failures of 1893.. Epidemics of childhood diseases which wreaked such havoc in the 19th Century were another major disruption of the school year. For example, several children in District 126, Sunset School, perished when a scarlet fever epidemic broke out in 1892.

The job of teaching was never easy, even when things were running smoothly. Like early rural school teachers all over America, those in Whitman County had to do more than merely impart the basics of education to their young charges. They also supplied janitorial services to the schools. They were required to arrive an hour before the start of classes to fire up the stove so the building would be warm when the children arrived. In addition, they cleaned and cared for the schoolroom and supervised the hauling of water from the well. It is likely that they also served as babysitters for very young children, since four- and five-year-olds are often listed on school rolls.

The overall management of a classroom of rambunctious, often unruly rural students required enormous energy. The teacher had to be a skilled organizer and a careful disciplinarian. Laurence Cremin in **American Education, the National Experience, 1783-1876,** well describes methods of classroom control and the delicate problem of discipline:

> Through an informal method of grouping different children for different subjects at different levels, the teacher attempted to keep the youngsters at work on various tasks. Sometimes the entire student group would go through

a sing-song drill together, spelling a group of words, reciting a multiplication table, or listing the capitals of the states; sometimes groups of three or four students would recite together; and sometimes individual students would take turns going through a question-and-answer drill with the teacher. In the interstices of the process, there was doubtless a good deal of room for sibling-and-peer-mediated instruction. But it was on the whole a relatively inefficient process, especially, as was usually the case, in the hands of an inexperienced teacher. Moreover, the associated disciplinary problems were often quite serious.

Very often a new teacher had to suffer through roughhouse initiation rites. In the St. John district, for example, this ordeal took the form of a "peanut shower" when the teacher's back was turned, a test by the students to see whether or not the teacher was "good natured." A teacher had to prove his or her strength before a class could function at all and usually this meant facing down the class "rowdies," very likely the biggest boys in the class whose physical stature could be imposing.

The life of an early teacher was dominated by the schoolhouse and the surrounding community. It was difficult indeed for the teacher to establish an independent existence or even feel a sense of privacy. Part of the reason for this had to do with the customary offer of free board and room by the community to help offset the teacher's low salary. In the first years of the county schools teachers boarded with local families. Blanche Hayes, who taught at the Lower Downing School, remembers that teachers were passed around from family to family in order to insure that all carried their fair share of school support. Later when their salaries rose, teachers boarded with one family for a certain percentage of their pay. Eventually, in one way or another, teachers received more private accommodations. After consolidation, when more substantial school buildings were constructed, the old one-room schoolhouses were sometimes retained for teacher's cottages, as was the case with the Eccles School in 1914. In 1919 the Feenan School District was having trouble getting families to board teachers and out of necessity had to build a teacher's cottage.

Curriculum: What Children Learned

Teachers perservered, managing in the face of much discomfort while earning few material rewards to instill literacy in the educational wilderness of the farming frontier. Their major educational resource was books, which, especially in the beginning, were not always easy to come by.

Barely a year after Washington Territory was established, the superintendents of Thurston and Pierce county schools published a list of texts recommended for use throughout the territory. This list marks the first attempt to establish a uniform curriculum for Washington schools and included many standard mid-19th Century American school books: Town's Spelling Book and Definer, McGuffey's Eclectic Readers, E. Willard's United States History, Mitchell's Geography, and Davies' Arithmetic. Unfortunately, individual schools often had no funds to acquire these or any other books. Out of necessity, many of the earliest schools in Washington Territory often had to make do with the books most readily available in the frontier home. For the largest segment of Whitman county citizens, this meant the family Bible in the durable King James version, the standard scripture of American Protestants since the early 17th Century. Hymnals and John Bunyan's **Pilgrim's Progress** were traditionally used to supplement religious training and also proved to be excellent readers for young children. Some tried-and-true American textbooks were passed down from

generation to generation. Some examples are: Noah Webster's famous Speller, the Reverend William Holmes McGuffey's Eclectic Readers, and George Bancroft's **History of the United States,** a patriotic and hero-centered epic that culminates with George Washington's first inauguration in 1789.

Various territorial schools were even obliged to make their own books. All that was needed was a little ingenuity and suitable printed material: old newspapers, pages cut from popular magazines, or hand written and decorated stories concocted by parents remembering and embellishing the stories they were told as children. One pioneer woman recalled her mother's efforts to create a homemade school book: "We went to bed, leaving Mother folding, sewing and pasting our books by the light of the open fire and tallow candles: in the morning on the table were our books covered with a piece of our mother's worn-out calico dress, her prettiest dress, I thought."

After the Educational Act of 1877 schools in Whitman County began to function with graded classes, standard rules and regulations for both students and teachers, and uniform textbooks. These schools would be readily recognized by today's students as being the real thing. Basic classes instructed from state manuals included Reading, Writing, Spelling, Language, Arithmetic, Geography, and Hygiene. This curriculum does not differ radically from that found in the primary and secondary schools of today, even though in the past, administrators, teachers and textbooks were more openly moralistic and patriotic.

Patriotism and the American Protestant ideal of moral rectitude were favorite subjects of discussion in the territorial schools. Territorial law stated, "It shall be the duty of all teachers to impress on the minds of their pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice and patriotism." In this same spirit, William B. Fowle, addressing the Washington Teachers Institute in 1880, specifically defined the roll of the school teacher as a spokesman for both civil and divine authority: "The teacher is more than an ordinary officer of the civil government; he is an officer of that supreme administration which is superior to civil power. He must deal with the plastic mind of immortal beings, drilling them for that irrepressible conflict between right and wrong which, no doubt, will always exist in every civilized society." Following this advice teachers habitually assigned readings which strongly implied that God and America were inseparable. One popular high school reader, for example, offered an entire sequence of patriotic and moral lectures: "Adam's Speech on Independence," "New England as Part of the Union," "The Constitution," and "The Value of Our Institutions to Future Times." A selection entitled "The American Flag" drives home the overall message in its final stanza:

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!
By angel hands to valor given;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy hues were born in heaven.

In many ways, however, the attitudes of our forebears seem curiously up to date. We tend to think of those times as being rigidly devoted to Victorian standards concerning sex roles, but this is a great over-simplification on our part. The latter half of the 19th Century saw its share of important feminist movements and concern for equal opportunity in education for women is reflected in assigned high school readings. A good illustration of this may be found in **Edward's Analytical Fifth Reader,** copyrighted in 1867, under the heading "Mental Culture for Women":

> Much is often said of improving the merit of woman by the culture of her intellect. This often leads to discussions about the comparative mental

capacities of men and women, which debates are very learned and eloquent, but never profitable. It can scarcely be wise to speculate upon the results in such a comparison until we have done that which has never yet been performed, until we have afforded woman an opportunity entirely equal to that of man to exhibit the extent to which her capabilities may effect her elevation.

Early Whitman county public school textbooks also reflect an interest in scientific progress. Post-Civil War America became enthralled with science and technological innovation. Science was thought to hold out almost limitless promise to mankind, offering untold creature comforts, greatly expanded avenues for travel, and perhaps even the physical and mental perfectability of the human being. This great Romance of Science inspired the movement toward a "progressive" education. Soon a good education in the sciences was thought essential and in keeping with the Jeffersonian ideal that the foundation for good democratic government lies in an enlightened electorate.

But nearly all American primary and secondary school textbooks in the 19th Century originated in New England, the Congregational and Presbyterian heartland of our educational system. Textbook writers welcomed science but tried various unsatisfactory ways to incorporate it into orthodox religious conceptions of how the world functioned. This led to a flurry of new textbooks which in turn were constantly revised and updated in order to reflect the very latest ideas about moral, civic, and scientific education. Each day in the classroom students were told to rely wholly on the religious verities of times past while preparing themselves for the new, wonderful Age of Science which would change everything. Daily prayers and liberal doses of Bible stories and aphorisms were followed by confusing lectures about dynamos, the solar system, and new advances in biology. All of this led to confusion in the minds of students and concern in the minds of parents that science was threatening religion. Eventually this created an artificial political and social controversy which culminated in Tennessee in 1925 when science and religion battled it out during the famous Scopes trial.

Even though religion was pronounced the official winner at the Scopes trial, the enormous advances of modern science could not be ignored by the public schools and today's students now receive scientific training much superior to that offered their great grandparents. A century ago, despite the widespread popularity of science, classes in chemistry, physics, and biology in the public schools were fairly primitive. Geology was considered merely background material for lessons in geography, and arithmetic did not progress much farther than simple algebra. "Hygiene," yesterday's equivalent of today's "health" classes, consisted of common-sense advice about general cleanliness, eating habits, and the evils of tobacco and alcohol use. And biology boiled down to long lists of plants and animals with bare and simplistic assertions about the theories of Charles Darwin thrown in for good measure.

In many ways, however, the early Whitman County schools may well have been superior to the public schools of today. For example, the average high school graduate of 1880 would likely have a greater active vocabulary than today's college graduate, and he or she would probably know a good deal more about Anglo-American literature and American history.

Although we might look with condescension on the late 19th Century high school history text (very much an heroic epic in the George Bancroft vein), Americans in those days took more interest and pride in knowing their past. The underlying social and economic forces of history were usually skipped, but the average Whitman County student in the 1880's or 90's would know many details about the lives of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Abraham Lincoln. He or she would be

familiar with the wording of the Declaration of Independence, the events of the American Revolution, and the Articles of Confederation as they related to the Constitution. The student would also know not only who Daniel Webster was, but which state he represented, and what he stood for.

And no child of this period could pass through grade school without being exposed to extensive examples of excellent English and American prose and poetry from the pens of Shakespeare, Bunyan, Milton, Defoe, Walter Scott, Byron, Dickens, Thackery, Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Longfellow, Poe, R. H. Dana, Emerson, Thoreau, and others. Many high school scholars, especially those who hoped to attend college, were even tutored in Latin and Greek and asked to read Homer, Ovid, and Vergil in the original.

Academies and Leoti L. West

A history of the early years of Whitman county education would not be complete without some mention of privately-funded religious academies. They came in two varieties, Catholic and Protestant, and they have a history of sometimes heated rivalry on the western frontier.

Catholic academies tended to survive for long periods of time because they were singlemindedly dedicated to education, because of the enduring financial and organizational stability of the parent church, and because of the significant Catholic population in several Whitman County communities. These schools offered, along with a daily mass and religious instruction, a general education that rivalled the best public schools of the day. In Whitman County the first Catholic Academy, St. Boniface Catholic School, was established in Uniontown in 1885 under the direction Sister Rosalie. The school accepted boarders and charged $40 for an introductory first year and $10 extra for any additional years. The town of Colton had two early Catholic schools: St. Scholastica Convent for young women which opened its doors in 1892 and St. Gall's Catholic School which began in 1893. Direct descendants of these institutions continue to serve the Catholic communities of the area. In 1892 Tekoa became the Home of St. Joseph's Academy which began as a boarding school for children from the DeSmet Mission but admitted students from other regions as well. And, finally, the city of Colfax welcomed St. John's Academy in 1915. This school was financed with funds beqeathed the church by J. McTierney and T. Mostyn, two long-time natives. It offered ten grades and averaged about 75 pupils a year until closing in 1965.

Throughout the 19th Century academies were especially popular with American Protestant churches, churches with a long standing concern for education, the spread of religious doctrine, and the general well-being of an expanding economy. These concerns have sometimes been at odds with one another and the story of Protestant academies has an interesting darker side.

In Washington Territory Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Baptist churches were in the forefront in founding academies. These schools served a dual purpose for their founders. They were both an educational institution and a major occasion for small town boosterism. In many ways they were essential to the introduction of quality education to rural communities which could ill-afford good schools without outside assistance and their value to education in Washington cannot be denied. They provided the equivalent of a good high school education laced, of course, with a generous helping of religious and moral training, and for the first time offered the frontier student courses specifically designed for college

preparation. However, Protestant academies were not without their drawbacks and, unlike their Catholic counterparts, most failed to survive into the 20th Century when tuition-free public schools became widespread.

While Protestant academies gave brand-new towns something to boast of, their major flaw was simply that they were an overly convenient avenue for raising money and enhancing community status. Once an academy was founded, money would be forthcoming from the parent church back east and from local and territorial benefactors. As the academy grew it often became the central showpiece of booster-style advertising campaigns and a method by which the value of church or privately owned land in the vicinity of the school could be inflated for the profit of the academy's promoters. All too often the academy became a classic case in good intentions gone awry and many an idealistic educator became the victim of the ambitions of community leaders who were more concerned with town status and profit than with education.

Such was the case of Colfax Academy when it was operated by Leoti L. West, one of Whitman County's most engaging and colorful pioneers. As early as 1876 Baptist

Leoti West (left) and James Perkins (right) held differing views about the direction education in Colfax should take.

Rev. S. E. Stearns and Theophilus Smith began soliciting funds for the construction of a church that would also serve as a school for the new town of Colfax. The Nez Perce Indian war of 1877 caused a general panic that delayed construction but by August of the following year the church-school was standing and ready to greet Leoti West, a native of Iowa, former "principal" of the English Department of Bayless Business College in Dubuque, and life-long Baptist.

Miss West states in her memoirs **The Wide Northwest** that she harbored a yearning to "go west," and, her 186 pounds notwithstanding, "grow up with the country." The Rev. J. C. Baker, superintendent of the Baptist missions in Oregon and Washington, gave her her big chance by inviting her to preside over Colfax Academy. Her imminent arrival in the Palouse region was proudly announced in advance over a two-month period. The rhetoric used in Colfax's **Palouse Gazette** to describe the new school is an obvious example of small town boosterism:

> (May 4, 1878) "An academy in Colfax!" It is known for some time efforts have been made to have an academy or high school in Colfax suitable for ad-

> vanced students . . . Miss Leoti L. West desires to come here and take charge of the school if a certain number of scholars can be guaranteed to warrant her coming the long distance to a new country . . .
>
> (June 8) This school will be a valuable addition to the institutions of Colfax and will do away with the necessity of advanced students going abroad . . .

Miss West would have been well advised to note that even before her arrival the "institutions of Colfax" had already begun to take priority over education.

Colfax Academy opened its doors September 10, 1878 and offered the following classes, one half payable in advance with the balance due on February 1:

Common English, $24 per annum—40 weeks
Higher English, $30 per annum—40 weeks
Bookkeeping and Penmanship, $20 per 13 week term
Business Penmanship, $9 per term—13 weeks

Leoti West was the school's principal and sole instructor and held class in a small frame church building 26 by 50 feet. This one-room schoolhouse contained, she tells us, 28 "homemade double desks," ten long benches, and an inefficient stove with a horizontal stove pipe that ran "nearly the entire length of the building." At one end of the room there was "a narrow raised platform upon which were placed a teacher's table with a single drawer, two raw-hide bottomed chairs and a small organ." The lighting was extremely poor and came from opposite rows of windows on either side of the room. There were no lamps, although auger holes had been dug in the window jams to hold candles "in the event of an evening service."

When Miss West complained to her boss, the Rev. Stearns, about these extremely poor facilities he replied that he could do little to help her. Undaunted, she set about on a one-woman campaign to improve and expand her school. Though a devout Baptist, she was also a natural democrat who believed all people, no matter their religion or profession, were basically good. If her employers could offer no real assistance she would seek help elsewhere in a school district which, according to her own estimate, was extensive: "[It] began on the south with the Snake River. It extended on the west to the Rockies and on the north to the North Pole."

Her first priority was lamps, proper illumination for her scholars. The initial stop of her crusade was a saloon kept by a Mr. Johnson, who on that quiet Saturday morning was standing idly in his doorway. "I told him what I wanted," she recalled, "and he said: 'Come into my office. I will give you something.'" She gamely followed him and was delighted when he handed over $3 directly from the till, although she respectfully declined the drink of hard liquor which the prankish bartender also offered. In less than two hours, Miss West visited all of Colfax's major businesses, including three more saloons and "two places that made beer," accumulating more than enough for the much-needed lamps. Soon thereafter she went on to persuade Leon Kuhn and Julius Lippett, two German Jewish businessmen and fellow boarders at the Ewart House, to foot the bill for school wallpaper, then borrowed a "cayuse" in order to scour the Palouse hills for pupils.

Leoti West had no regrets about cultivating friendships with non-Baptist and sometimes worldly people, even though association with the unorthodox may have eventually scored against her with her employers. She recalls:

> I knew no social classes so far as the school was concerned. Indeed, I should have starved to death had I drawn the lines too closely. The saloon men and the gamblers were among my staunch friends. They sent their children to

school and paid the tuition promptly. I shall never cease to regard these men and women as among the finest I have ever known.

Over the next three years she increased enrollment from 17 students to just over 100, some of whom were provided board and room in church facilities. She hired an assistant principal, a music teacher and a language teacher; added graded classes and began offering night courses. During this time she also served as the Baptist Sunday School superintendent and was instrumental in founding the Colfax Academy Library Association. Perhaps most remarkable of all, she kept her school solvent even if it meant personal financial sacrifice. In every way Miss West's tenure at Colfax Academy was an outstanding success.

In 1881 the Rev. S. W. Beaven assumed responsibility for the Baptist pastorates in both Moscow and Colfax. Beaven had grand designs for Colfax Academy which included incorporation and expansion. A two-story three-room structure was added to the main building and the always-enthusiastic Miss West raised $150 for the project by putting on a well-attended supper and candy sale. At about this time a school board was formed which included Beaven and several well-known Colfax citizens: James A. Perkins, W. A. Inman, and Thomas Kennedy. Leoti West was appointed principal and general business manager and encouraged to remain on indefinitely. This she whole-heartedly wished to do, refusing over the next two years prestigious administrative posts at schools back in Iowa.

Miss West's career in Colfax came to an abrupt end shortly after the Academy was officially incorporated in 1883. For some time the directors had considered the institution as the ultimate showpiece for promoting Colfax as a sophisticated educational center. But a mere high school had become too modest for their growing ambitions. Without Miss West's knowledge, the board began envisioning a full-scale college to be built on a hill overlooking the town from the west. The first hint of these intentions reached her when she invited Judge W. A. Inman to speak at one of her Friday afternoon rhetorical exercises. The judge complied, giving Miss West no advanced warning of the shock he had in store for her. "After eulogizing my work," she tells us, "and expressing the greatest confidence in my ability to teach, he nearly took my breath away by remarking that it was the plan of the board as soon as possible to secure some good man to take over the work and make the school a real success." Despite the fact that she remained gracious to a fault to her dying day, never uttering a harsh word of complaint about her rude treatment by the Academy's board of directors, Leoti West was deeply hurt by this action. Colfax Academy had largely been her own creation and its prosperity depended greatly on her. E. T. Trimble, the "good man" chosen to replace her, took charge of the school only to witness its transformation into the decidedly unsuccessful Colfax College. Miss West took her leave of Colfax in March of 1883. She had first come to the town five years before in possession of some $500. She left $50 in debt, her last recources selflessly given to her school. It was a thankless goodbye for one of the country's finest and most respected educators.

The Academy officially became Colfax College in 1884 with I. A. Perkins as its first president. From the beginning this grandiose enterprise, the product of boosterism run rampant, had little chance of survival. It flourished briefly, then sunk into steady decline. In Miss West's words, it was a pampered child "just out of swaddling clothes," given a new name, then overindulged until it was made sick and forced into a "premature grave." Today it is regarded, by those who know of it at all, as an odd curiosity, a strange experiment that failed. It is far overshadowed by glowing memories of Colfax Academy during the days when it was run by "pioneer teacher" Leoti L. West.

Miss West's career after she left Colfax encompassed the passing of the lonely one-room schoolhouse and the formation of a vast statewide system of public education. As might be expected she played a vital role in this process. In 1881 she had been appointed by Governor William A. Newell as the eastern Washington representative to the Territorial Board of Education and in this capacity had a hand in organizing the entire school system. In 1883 she became principal of Baker School in Walla Walla, and, after statehood was achieved in 1889, went to Olympia to help draft the state's first standardized course of study. Thereafter she served as principal at a succession of schools in Rosalia, Republic, Eltopia, and Camano. She retired in 1922 at the age of 71 and settled in Spokane where she serialized her memoirs in the **Spokesman Review.** She died in 1933 well-satisfied with her long life in education.

Leoti West witnessed a great deal, but her years as an early Whitman County educator always remained close to her heart, perhaps because she realized that the frontier school was in many ways the foundation of the American educational system. Although in the early 20th Century educators across the country began more and more to emphasize the benefits of uniformity and standardization, the local community remained an important factor in shaping the public schools. Schools changed not simply because of the dictates of state or federal governments. They changed because their communities changed. Consolidation, an increased emphasis on scientific education, and new standards of literacy all came about in response to the altered social and economic conditions of local communities. The one-room schoolhouse may have disappeared from Whitman County, but in ways that would be recognized by the pioneer teacher, today's schools are still very much influenced by the people they serve.

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West, J. B. **Growing Up in the Palouse** (Chapter VII—School Days). Privately printed, [Rosalia **Citizen-Journal,** 1980.]

West, Leoti L. **The Wide Northwest.** Spokane: Shaw and Borden Co., 1927.

The Whitman County Oral History Collection, located in the Perkins House in Colfax, contains many interviews with early Whitman County teachers, whose reminiscences of their teaching careers contribute to an understanding of early education in the area.

The Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections division of Holland Library at Washington State University contains much material relating to early Whitman County education, including records and papers pertaining to Colfax College.

Colfax College and English's Collegiate School: Examples of early higher education in the Palouse

by Marvin G. Slind

Like many pioneer communities in the west, Colfax, Washington tried to meet its educational needs by founding an academy which later became a college. (Academies were nineteenth century successors to the older "Latin-grammar schools," and the forerunners of modern public high schools.) Colfax Academy was established by the Colfax Baptist Church in 1878. The leading figure in its development until 1883 was the pioneer in Inland Empire education, Leoti West. Throughout most of its existence, as an academy and as a college, the institution was closely associated with the Baptist Church; frequently it was simply referred to as the "Baptist College."

—Photos courtesy of Manucripts, Archives and Special Collection, Washington State University

Mary Louise and F. N. English were advocates of a classical curriculum at Colfax College, later to become English's Collegiate Academy.

Following Leoti West's dismissal in 1883 (for reasons discussed in the previous article), Colfax Academy continued for two years under the direction of E. T. Trimble, a native of New York state, who had graduated from Bucknell University in the classical course in 1877. On July 22, 1885 the Board of Trustees revised Colfax Academy's articles of incorporation and the school became Colfax College. The trustees immediately initiated plans for the construction of a new building on a site that would overlook Colfax from a prominent point on the west side of town. The following year, 1886, the college hired F. N. English (1851-1931), of Greenwich, New Jersey. He, too, was a

Bucknell University graduate. Of all the persons who would be involved with the institution, it would be English who would have his name associated with it for the rest of its existence.

In 1887, the total enrollment at the college was 105. Students were offered three four-year courses: classical, scientific, and normal. As with similar private schools of the day, Greek and Latin were strongly emphasized, as well as "mental philosophy," and "moral and mental science." The normal course, which was designed to prepare public school teachers, offered "diplomas" rather than degrees. This course included a study of regular public school subjects, as well as algebra and geography. The final two years were similar to the classical course, but with the addition of more professional subjects. But even after becoming a college the institution continued to offer academy work. This course consisted of a two year study of Latin, civil government, arithmetic, and English grammar. The school's business course included such practical subjects as typing, bookkeeping, stenography, and business form.

In 1889 Mr. Trimble resigned as president, to become president of the new Grace Seminary of Centralia. Professor F. N. English became acting president. His wife, Mary Louise, was by this time also an employee of the college, teaching higher English and mathematics. By the time English took charge of the institution its financial situation was becoming unstable. The construction of the new school building had created a substantial debt for the school. When the structure was started it had been agreed that the Baptist Church and the people of Colfax would share costs. But by June 21, 1887 the school's Board of Trustees declared that:

> Whereas in the history of nearly every educational institution there is a period during which it is very dificult [sic] matter to provide for the current expenses and,
>
> Whereas Colfax College is now passing through that period in its history,

the financial agent, Rev. J. Cairns, was commissioned to secure subscriptions for a "deficit fund." The teachers were instructed "to admit no students to recitation in any of the departments of the College until by a receipt or otherwise he shows that satisfactory arrangements have been made with the treasurer for tuition." In 1888 the Board of Trustees noted that the new building had left them "financially embarassed and in great danger of losing the building partly erected and partly paid for." By January 1889, the citizens of Colfax raised $6,645.00 and the Church raised $6,117.10, but the outstanding indebtedness was still $11,386.00. Creditors closed the new building forcing the college to hold its classes in the old school.

Rev. Cairns shortly resigned as Colfax College's financial agent (due to ill health). His successor, Rev. J. C. Baker launched an effort to cover debts by raising additional subscriptions and finally got the new building opened. This new building, a four-story frame structure, sixty-five by forty-five feet, and thirty-five rooms was a sight to behold. The first floor contained the dining room, kitchen, bathroom, three bedrooms, parlor, closet, and fuel room. On the second floor there were two classrooms, an office, a chapel, and two wardrobes. There were two classrooms and seven music rooms on the third floor, while the fourth had thirteen bedrooms.

Unfortunately, Baker's subscription did not provide sufficient money in the long run. Also, the establishment of a public high school in Colfax drew off much of the potential support for the Baptist school. In 1888 Reverend Baker resigned as President. At the same time, in September, the Board of Trustees authorized the mortgage of the property for $6,000.00 (this was ultimately accomplished in January, 1889). Before leaving the Reverend Baker also arranged for Mr. and Mrs. English to take over

administration of Colfax College, with a contract for the next five years. It was understood that the school was to be self-supporting; the college curriculum was not to be eliminated. Mr. English remained as president until 1899 (in June 1898, the college granted him the "honorary degree of Ph.D.").

During English's ten years as president, the school continued to experience financial difficulties. In his President's Report to the Board of Trustees on May 8, 1899, English recalled:

> I was to run it without any help from the Board as to its running expenses. For three or four years we worked on without any Financial Agent, having during the last two or three years the school through the courtesy of Messrs Livingston and Kuhn for it had been sold at sheriffs [sic] sale and they had bid it in to cover their claim. In this condition it was impossible to say at the end of one year whether there would be a school the next or not.

A new financial agent, Pastor George H. Newman, "went into the field" to help raise money, and cleared over $14,000 of debts. English claimed responsibility for approximately $1,000 of this, since he only received 1½ years' salary in his first three years as president.

The school's economic fortunes reflected those of the area and the nation as a whole. Although the school had "just about made both ends meet" by 1893-94, "the hard times" cut enrollment drastically, and during the next two years the school was again in debt. Colfax was obviously hit by the "Panic of 1893" which affected most of America. By 1898, however, conditions had improved slightly. The financial report of June 1, 1898, indicated that the school had "Expected Resources" of $13,171.85, and liabilities of $13,109.09, leaving a balance of $62.76. English reported that he had made great personal financial sacrifices in behalf of the school during his presidency.

Despite the school's slightly improved financial situation, English's difficulties were not all resolved. Apparently considerable animosity developed between English and the local Baptist Minister, Rev. J. E. Coombs. For some reason which is not clear in available documents, Coombs did not want the Englishes to run the school, and he succeeded in having them removed in 1899.

In his final President's Report to the Board of Trustees, English complained that "the year has been charged and surcharged with **lies** and misrepresentations and as I have taken the trouble to trace them up I have located them under two roofs and you know whose they are ___________." English apparently meant Rev. Coombs and his own wife's brother, Harry L. Plummer, for the board secretary noted that the transcript of English's speech included in the minutes omits "pp. 7-14 which are derogatory to the Plummers and Rev. J. E. Coombs."

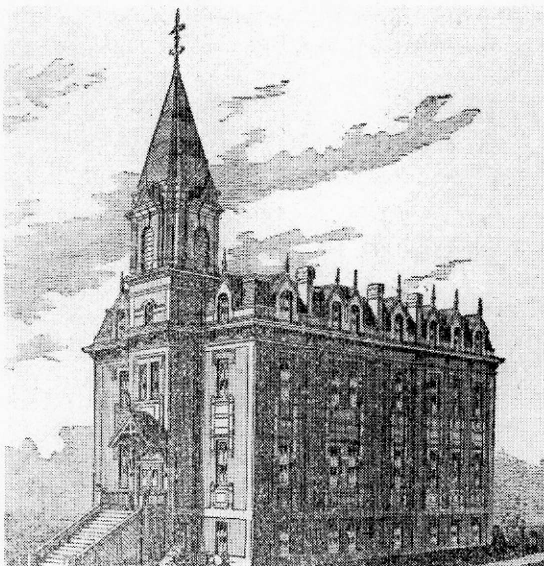
At the May 9, 1899 Board of Trustees meeting, Coombs moved that instead of having the college administered by one man, the board as a whole should administer it. It was thus taken out of English's control; Rev. G. R. Schlauch, pastor of the Baptist Church of Lewiston, was named President.

During English's ten years as president, 550 students had been enrolled in the school. Eight had graudated from the College, and 18 from the preparatory department. A total of 108 students had been enrolled in his last year as president.

Following English's ouster as president, his relationship to the Board of Trustees did not improve. At its annual meeting of June 16, 1899, the Board moved "to serve legal notice on F. N. English for the vacation of the building." This was "angrily objected to by Mr. English, who charged the Board, in bitter terms, with having dealt dishonorably with him." (When he agreed to vacate the building before the beginning of school in the fall, the motion was withdrawn.)

Rev. Schlauch apparently served as president for only six months. The following year, after a discussion and tabling a motion that the school not be reopened for the coming year, Rev. E. B. Pace, Pastor of the Garfield Baptist Church, was named president for the 1900-01 year. The financial difficulties, however, remained unresolved. On June 10, 1902, the Board of Trustees' Executive Committee was "empowered to sell at Fifteen hundred dollars or more, the College building and contents, pay all bills approved by the Executive Committee, and divide any and all balance between E. B. Pace, Alice Cary and Mary Lewis in just and proper proportions for salary for services rendered." On July 28, 1902, the Board of Trustees met to disincorporate Colfax College.

Professor and Mrs. English once again took over the school and continued to run it under the name of "English's Collegiate School." In 1904-05, the school was offering classical preparatory, a Latin scientific course, an academic course, and a teacher's



—Photo courtesy of Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections, Washington State University

Colfax College as it appeared on the cover of an 1897 ***Colfax Collegian.***

course. English charged the same tuition rates for a twelve week term that had been in effect at Colfax College during his last year as president: primary classes, $8.00; academic classes in English, $12.00; academic classes in languages, $15.00; and college preparatory courses, $15.00. Students were also offered music lessons and the use of a piano for practice. They could live in unfurnished rooms at the rate of $6.00 per term, or furnished rooms for $10.00. Board was $36.00.

For a time, the Englishes taught in an old school building on North Mill, but after fires destroyed it and their residence, they moved into the college building, where they remained the rest of their lives.

As public schools improved, and particularly as Washington Agricultural College in Pullman enlarged, there was little need for this private college. As enrollment dwindled, Mr. and Mrs. English finally discontinued the school, but they both did considerable tutoring for pupils from the public schools. In 1924, English noted that

they could always find students needing their services. He complained that the youngsters were getting nothing in the public school. "I guess that in a few years the only thing required will be fol-de-rolls. The Three R's will be put out of commission entirely and no attention paid to them whatever."

"The Mrs. and myself are 'old fogy' enough to think that the object of school is to develop the head in preference to the heels. So we could not pass an examination for Public School work."

In addition to tutoring, the Englishes made a living by growing fruit and berries on their acreage, and renting rooms in the former college. (After he began working in the orchard, English reportedly replaced his immense beard with a Van Dyke.) Mr. and Mrs. English both tutored students as long as they lived. In 1924, at the age of 86, Mrs. English died while waiting for a pupil to arrive for lessons.

Despite the dedication of educators such as Leoti West and the Englishes, and the many other teachers and administrators who served at Colfax Academy, Colfax College, and English's Collegiate School, the need for a private college in Colfax was not sufficient to warrant its continued existence. The establishment of a public high school in Colfax removed much of its former support, and the founding and growth of a state college added competition which it could not overcome. Although its existence testifies to the interest for learning and the intellectual ambitions of Coflax's early residents, their needs were soon met by public institutions, and the college could no longer survive.

New Books . . .

For those interested in the history of the Palouse, J. B. West's newly published **Growing Up in the Palouse** is essential reading. West, a first-rate narrative writer, weaves his recollections into a well-documented story of the town of Palouse and the surrounding community. With its numerous photographs and several very fine maps **Growing Up in the Palouse** makes an excellent reference work. J. B.'s knowledge of marriages, when property changed hands, and which businesses come and went is extensive. His descriptions of social life make the book interesting reading for anyone interested in the history of the region. It deserves to go on the bookshelf next to that other classic in Palouse history, Kincaid and Harris's **Palouse in the making.** For mail orders send $11.11 to Roy Chatters, S. W. 240 Blaine, Pullman, Washington 99163. (Washington residents add 50 cents tax.)

A second recent publication on Whitman County history is a work sponsored by the local "Corral" of the Westerners. With the awesome title **Nez Perce Palouse Corral Occasional Publication Number One,** this book contains several provocative essays on the history of the region. Included are Frances W. Milne's "Pioneer storekepper moves west," and Lavon M. Koger's "Nobody said it would be easy;" both are tales of pioneers, wagon trains, and moving west. Thomas Heuterman, expert on the pioneer press, included an excellent article entitled "Beyond the frontier press: no typical editors." Essays by the Hardings, Bruce and Lenna, begin and end the publication. Lenna's piece, "Volcano diary," is certain to be of interest to all of us who lived through those hectic days after the 18th of May 1980. Then, of course, there is Bruce Harding's excellent resource piece entitled "Research anyone? Archival/manuscript sources in the Inland Empire." This article should be considered essential reading for anyone doing research in history of this region. We congratulate the Nez Perce Palouse Corral of the Westerners on their fine effort. We hope that future occasions for such "occasional publications" will be frequent.