

BRIEF HISTORY OF POTLATCH SCHOOLS

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This week marks the close of a successful term of the Potlatch schools, which is made the occasion for a special school edition of the Union Church News, published at Potlatch. We publish below from the special issue of the News, an interesting history of the school in the lumber town, since the town was started eight years ago.

"The members of the high school graduating class are as follows: Goldie Fansler, Joe Terteling, Signa Anerson, Marjorie Balch, Alice Broton, Alice Carr, Coretta Cunningham, and Margureite Daniels. Several members of the class were former members of the Palouse schools.

From the time of the founding of Potlatch nine years ago until now, the supplying of good schools to the children of the employees has been one of the first considerations of the Lumber Company. During the first year of the towns history, however, it was impossible to have a school in Potlatch. This was due to the fact that no school district had been organized. With the organization of School District No. 94, which includes only Potlatch, school was opened for the first time in November, 1906.

During the first two terms of school Mr. T. C. Reese, now a teacher in Idaho County, was principal. A difficult problem confronted him. The first year's school was held in a temporary school building, now used as a boarding house. Then, too, he had the task of grading a school of one hundred and fifty or more pupils, none of whom came from the same school. Nevertheless, during the first two years, some very good work was done. Two years of high school work was carried on, although not many students were enrolled for that work.

The third year of the school's history, Mr. J.D. Huston, now principal at Cottonwood, Idaho was in charge of the work. There were seven teachers during that year and among them were several who were very strong. Miss E. Montgomery did excellent work, as did also Miss Edna Vince, who is now Mrs J. E. Gardner of Potlatch. Three years of high school work was attempted during this year.

Since the beginning of the fourth year, Sept. 1909, the schools have been in charge of F. E. Lukens. There are four other teachers who have been in the schools since that time. They are Miss Etta M. Kinsman, Miss Viola McCartor Miss Lillie Vassar and Mrs H. E. Hunt (nee Miss Bertha Reeder). During the fourth year the amount of high school work was reduced to two years and an effort was made to make the quality of the work better. The grading of the school had to be changed from a half years promotion basis to a yearly basis. This change was not completely accomplished for two years.

The growth of the high school has been steady, although not rapid. During 1910-11 the third year was added and during the following year the fourth. In 1912 the first class, consisting of two members, Ruben Goodman and Loyd Terteling, was graduated from a four year course. In the spring of 1912 the high school was placed on the University accredited list. In 1913 Fretha Swedland was graduated and this year a class of eight will finish the course. Several teachers have stood out prominently during the development of the high school. Miss Margaret G. Walker and Mr. A.P. Beckner were both very strong and popular with the students and it was largely due to them that the high school work was put on a sound basis during two trying years. Miss Mattie Lou Boardman also is remembered for her good work in English.

With the addition of the department of Home Economics and Manual Training two years ago the Potlatch schools were placed abreast with the most progressive of schools. They started on a new era in which the work is to become more practical so that boys and girls may be fitted to do something when they finish their school work. Miss Sandborn's work in the Home Economics department is worthy of strong commendation.

An account of the history of the Potlatch schools would not be complete without mentioning the liberal spirit which the Lumber Company, and Mr. A. W. Laird, the General Manager, have shown in providing for the schools. Mr. Laird, as President of the School Board has continually has it as his aim to make the schools better so that Potlatch might be a better place to live."

Courtesy
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