

This is an excerpt from pages 44-48 of *Sublimity, The Story of an Oregon Countryside, 1850-1950* by Mark Schmid, The Library Bookstore, St. Benedict, Oregon 1951

Written by a Sublimity native, a scholarly Benedictine priest, it is far and away the best book on Sublimity. Read the whole thing if you can find it. Of course there's a reading copy in the Archives, not for lending.

Sublimity College

. . . The college also had limited accommodations for boarders on the upper floor, but the lack of home comforts and discipline made it more popular to board with a family in town. (Statesman, Aug. 1, 1864). Being a semi-public institution due to the way its trustees were chosen, the college received public funds, partly pro-rated as due-bills to students.

The first teacher as well as president of the college was no other than Milton Wright, later to be made a Bishop of the United Brethren Church. He was also the father of Orville and Wilbur Wright who have become world famous for their invention of flying machines (airplanes). Mr. Wright was a strict disciplinarian, even to the point of harshness, and also influenced the spirit of the town so that Mr. Garrison who later took his position could write, "Sublimity was at this time a remarkable community, noted for its peacefulness and purity of morals." (See, DOWN, Hist, of Silverton Country, p. 215). Sad to say this peacefulness was rudely interrupted a few years later when the issues of the Civil War turned men's mind against each other, here, as well as in the greater part of the nation. The College was closed down during the second half of the War due to the differences and arguments among the trustees about slavery and the other war issues.

Besides Mr. Wright there were two other professors, namely, Thomas Crawford and W. W. Beach. Mr. Crawford taught ancient languages and higher mathematics, whilst Mr. Beach had charge of the english courses. Mr. Crawford was only twenty-five years of age, having just graduated from Willamette University at Salem. He remained only four years when he went to Portland and later became well-known as an educator, finally becoming city Superintendent of schools there. Mr. Wright was but 29 years of age when he came to Sublimity as an ordained minister of the United Brethren church. Besides teaching he took care of what was ' then known as a "Circuit" of religious camp meeting" and revivals. He stayed only two years at Sublimity College and in 1859 was recalled by the mother church in Indiana, where he soon married and became the father of the two famous Wright boys,

inventors. These latter never saw Sublimity, as □ some people seem to think. Wright was elected Bishop of his Church in 1877, and edited their religious paper known as the "Telescope."

Sublimity College was re-opened after the Civil War on February 13, 1865, since the animosities created by the war were soon forgotten, and the trustees had been reorganized into a smaller group. Thomas Crawford now took the presidency for one year, and was succeeded by J. R. Sellwood. Mr. Sellwood came from the east-side in Portland having previously graduated from Willamette University. He later became a prominent Portland business man, and the Sellwood District in Southeast Portland still bears his name with pride. The fourth and last president of Sublimity College was Prof. John M. Garrison, also a graduate of Willamette University. He had crossed the mountains in 1846, and was a man of strong religious convictions. He did everything possible to build up the College and the enrollment reached a record number of 125 pupils in 1871. (See, Lockley, Oregon Journal, May 5, 1935.) Besides the primary grades, algebra, geometry, latin, english and music were taught. The College became known far and wide for two outstanding accomplishments - it had the best latin department in the State, whose students could challenge anyone in the ancient tongue, and it had the best baseball team ever seen in these parts, for it even went to Salem and beat Willamette University on its home diamond. This naturally created a sensation throughout the state and advertised the college far and wide. One can rest assured it was also the talk of the town at Sublimity far far into the next several years.

Sublimity College had no student organizations in those days since most of the pupils lived on farms where there was plenty work and diversion to take up out-of-school hours. There was, however, a regular program of gymnastic exercises, held mostly outdoors, since gymnasiums were then unknown. The school yard (located on the site of the present St. Boniface Church) had a number of trapezes, cross-bars, rings and croquet diamonds. The baseball diamond was just east of the College (about where

the parish hall stands). Frequent entertainments were held in the form of recitations, dialogues, shows and musical selections. These were sometimes followed by a religious admonition to the students by some travelling Revivalist. Prominent among these were a Rev. Mr. A. Hurley, and S. Simpson, both from Salem.

Sublimity College has now passed into oblivion, and many have wondered why it should have closed its doors a second time never to be re-opened. Mr. Garrison, its last president, states in his diary that he "does not know why the school broke up just when it seemingly was at the height of its career." He also tells us that the name "College" was given to the school in order to boom the town, since the early pioneers had great respect for "College Education" because it really meant something in those days, for, few ever had the opportunity to obtain it. He says the school never really was a college "but only a glorified grade school" which probably never even reached as far as our highschool of today. (See, DOWN, Hist, of Silverton, p. 215). The fact that such highschool subjects as latin, algebra and geometry were taught shows that the grade school of those early days really included much of our present-day highschool. Its graduates were better equipped to

take their place in the world than many a highschool "grad" of today. A few of its outstanding students whose names we have found are J. J. Brewer who later became a professor at Walla Walla College, Washington; the Holmes boys and girls; the Taylors, Darbys, the Downing and Hunt children. Also students from as far away as Eugene, Albany, Lebanon, Salem, Oregon City and Yamhill are mentioned who later became the prominent citizens of their home towns.

It is probable that the greatest single cause for the sudden closing of Sublimity College was the withdrawal of the United Brethren Church from the venture. The 1870's were bad economic years following the Civil War. There was a "depression" of sizeable proportions even in this new country, since eastern markets were disorganized. Then too there was the Sublimity Public School District No. 7 which had been organized prior to 1856, and its promoters were always somewhat antagonistic to the college since it was a competitor, although all students for a time attended classes together. Both schools taught primary subjects and both received public money. It may be that the gradual shifting of public interest to their own public school sounded the financial death knell for the College.