

London School

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London, Oregon is located in the southernmost part of the Willamette Valley, on the banks of the Willamette River, originally home to bands of Kalapuya. The current community was established by hardy settlers coming by wagon train to Oregon to settle down on a farm of their own and raise a family.



This was not an easy life for the families. There was much hardship and work as the residents of this southern valley pushed forward, in building a community.

Arriving in 1866, Levi Jones, having children of his own, was concerned about their education. It was then decided that Mr. Jones would become the first teacher for the London School District.

Once the school was established it didn't make it any easier for most of the children to get to school. The roads were very **crude** and most families did not have readily available wagons and horses that they could spare from the farm. At first it was not unusual for there to be only five or six students present. Those in attendance likely lived close enough to walk, students big and small would walk as much as 2 or 3 miles, just to get to school. The weather could be very cold in the winter, so school was generally only in session from September through the end of November.

The very first school in the area was just one room. It was located on the Walker Ranch, near a small creek on the Carl Small and the Bemis property line. The first settlers to send children to the school were the Geer, and Bemis and the Rouse families. The one room school house is where children from six years of age up to 18 years old were educated together. **Attendees** of the school had many responsibilities. It was important for the older children to help with the small ones, and they did. Wood needed to be cut and brought in daily for the standard wood stove used to keep the building warm. Water had to be **hauled** in from the



river as there was no indoor plumbing, which also meant that an outhouse served as the bathroom. With no cafeteria, lunch was brought by the students from home, sometimes in a tin box, or just wrapped up in a cloth.

As in many small towns, the school became a vital part of the community. It represents some of the earliest efforts of neighboring families working together to serve the group and begin building a community.



London School as additions were added. The original building now serves as the library, the first addition is now the cafeteria and the third addition is still used as the gym.



As time went on, the London School population grew and so did their buildings. The

one room school house was joined by one addition after another creating the school children attend today. Early sections are still a part of the school, currently used as the library, cafeteria, and gym. Many of the students that now attend there are direct decedents of the first children that were there many years ago. The London School has been a part of this southern valley since 1867, and continues today to be an outstanding place to be.

Discussion Points

1. Why do you think it was so important to early settlers like Levi Jones to provide an education to the children of the community?
2. What are your responsibilities at school? How do these compare to the responsibilities of children attending school in the 1800's?

Vocabulary

Attendees: a person who is present at an event or gather

Crude: constructed in a rudimentary or makeshift way, in a natural or raw state; not yet processed or refined

Hauled: to move an object from one location to another by pulling, dragging, or carrying using some means of significant effort or force

