

Appendix 1

Letter to D.E. Richards (Superintendent 1932–1945) from George F. Hall (probably 1943)

To D.E. Richards,

Thinking you might be interested in knowing some of the history of the Eastern Oregon Experiment Station. Thought I would write some of the facts concerning its origin.

During the term of Governor Penoyes, a bill was introduced by Senator Matlock in the Legislature of 1893 which provided for the establishment of a Branch Insane Asylum to be located in Eastern Oregon, the place to be selected by the board of Commissioners, consisting of the Governor, Sec. of State, and State Treasurer, but owing to a similar case, then pending in the courts, nothing further was done until the following year.

Then, after a thorough investigation by the board of different cities that sought the institution, the board decided in January 1894, upon a site adjoining Union. Naturally our citizens were greatly pleased with the prospect of this state institution, being established in Union. Then immediately following the decision of the board, suit was brought in the circuit court of Marion County, against the board, by the State responded by A.C. Taylor, and an injunction served, to restrain them from purchasing the land, owing to a clause in the State Constitution which prohibited the establishment of state institutions outside the capital at Salem.

After a considerable length of time in which this Bill was wrangled through the court, it was finally decided in favor of the decisions of the state board, and Governor Penoyer, Secretary of State McBride and State Treasurer Melchian, purchased the site selected at Union at a consideration of \$25,000, but decided to leave the completion of the project to Gov. York's administration. The feeling around the capital so strongly opposed this measure that it was again thrown into the courts, with the result that the building of the asylum on this site was defeated, until the State Constitution should be amended. By conditions of the original Bill, if this appropriation was not used within two years, it would revert back to the state. Through the influence of Eastern Oregon representatives in the State Legislature, additional time was granted and thus it gave our townsmen a chance to work for something else.

Several Union citizens who personally aided in the project have since passed away. First the idea was conceived that we might secure a Branch Agricultural College to be located on this site, so we decided to try for it, and, in consequence a Committee, composed of the following citizens was appointed. S.A. Purcel, Thomas Brashen, and Geo F. Hall, to solicit funds, to send a group of Union citizens to Salem to present the project to the Legislature. Other members of this group were, W.F. Wright, J.M. Carroll, E.W. Davis and L.J. Davis. At Salem we met strong opposition from the Board of Regents of the State Agricultural College, these being, James A. Withycombe, J.K. Weatherford, Col. Apperson and the members of the staff, none of whom would indorse the plan, so all our men were badly discouraged. Most to the giving up place, in fact Mr. Wright, Pres. of the First Nat. Bank, returned home. Later I got in touch with W.P. Cady, a member of the Legislature, whom I had personally known before and he told me that they had suggested to Mr. W.J. Wright, that if it were properly put up to the regents of the State Agricultural College, they might consent to the establishment of an Experimental Station on the site that had been purchased by the State.

As the session of the legislature adjourned on Friday until Monday a.m. most all the Legislators and Lobbyists left for Portland for the weekend. On the train that evening, I talked with our group, about the suggestion of Sen. Cady and they thought best that we contact him as soon as possible on this matter. Which we did on the following morning. E.W. Davis and I were asked to do this, as the others of our group had just had a very heated argument with the board at Salem. Sen. Cady advised us to return to Salem with him on Sunday, and that he would have the Attorney General draw up the Bill for Monday morning, which he did. Then Mr. Cady asked the regents of the State Agricultural College for their consideration of the Bill, and to our surprise it met with their approval, so we finally got the Bill through. Thanks were due W.P. Cady, for making this project a reality. In 1901 the Legislature appropriated \$10,000 for the establishment of The Eastern Oregon Experiment Station on its present site at Union.

The Board first sent Professor Lee Kimby here to organize the work. He was later followed by George Gammie, a practical farmer and stockman. On his retirement, the next Superintendent appointed was the late Robert Withycombe, who worked consistently and efficiently until removed by death. Then came its present Superintendent, D.E. Richards, who has further advanced the fine reputation of the Station, and by his excellent management given to it its fine financial rating. In its success and far reaching benefit to the agricultural and stock raising interests of the State, our citizens can feel a just-pride as, personally, I do, in having been privileged to help locate the Eastern Oregon Experiment Station at Union. Hail to you Dick, and good luck,

Geo F. Hall