

# Gooding College

1917 - 1938

by David G. White

Gooding College was a higher education school from 1917-1938. It was founded and operated by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The college was located south of Gooding and had its own post office, Wesleyan. Frank Gooding and the Gooding Town site Corporation gave seventy acres to the school and many unsold lots within the town itself. The college had a campus of 110 acres. Two buildings with a white brick exterior were constructed on the campus. Prior to its opening the community of Gooding gave \$267,000 to the institution with the understanding that the Methodist Episcopal Church and its constituents would raise another \$130,000.

The first student enrolled at the college was Frank Bennett who became president of Eastern Oregon State College. Mary Blue in 1919 was the first graduate. The last class was composed of two and graduated in May of 1938. At its peak the college had an enrollment of 209 in 1928. Fifty-six people graduated from Gooding College in its first ten years of existence.

Bachelor of Arts was the only degree offered by the school. In its beginning students were placed into three different groups, preparatory, special and regular. Preparatory students were those who sought to finish their high school education while taking some college course at the same time. Special students took less than twelve hours of regular college courses. Regular students took twelve or more hours.

Basketball, speech and debate teams competed against other colleges. Idaho State College was on the basketball schedule. The school also sponsored outlaw high school basketball tournaments. The debate team competed with schools in Oregon, Washington, and California including the University of Southern California.

Fine arts were strong with the presentation of various dramas. Musical concerts including national artists were given through the efforts of Madame Lillie Sang Collins, a faculty member. Two papers were published by the student body the Seismograph and The Gooding Collegian. An annual, The Sagebrush, was also produced.

The college had one president most of its life, Dr. Charles Wesley Tenny, who led the school from 1917 to 1935. He resigned due to pressure to include non-academic subjects in the curriculum. W.F. Shaw became president. He resigned to take a position in the Office of Education, Dept. of the Interior, in Washington D.C. Rev. W.H. Hertzog of Twin Falls was acting president when the college closed due to financial losses.

The property was given over the Conference Claimants (Pension) Board of The Idaho Conference of The Methodist Church. It had loaned money to keep the school functioning. In 1941 the property was given to the State of Idaho for the development of a tuberculosis hospital which opened in 1946. Reformatted: 10 May 2016