

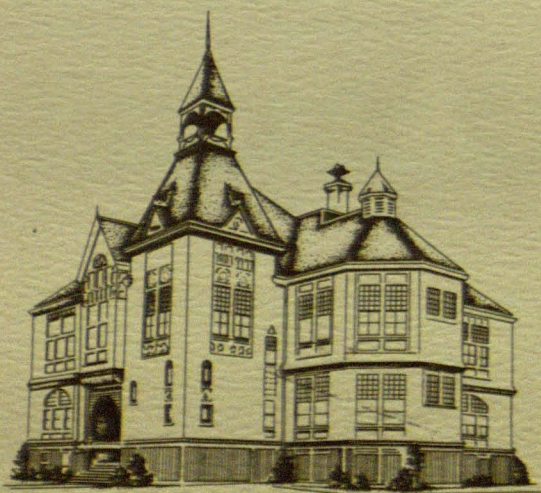
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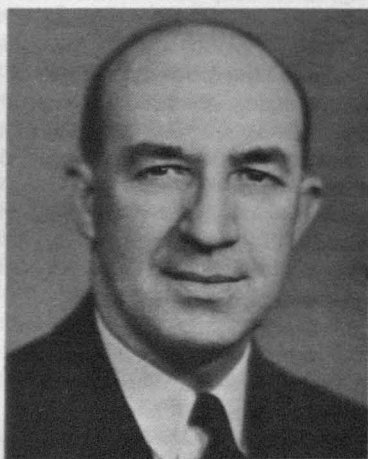
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FOURTH and MADISON



A History of the Eugene Vocational
School 1938-1965 by David Butler



Dedicated to O.D. Adams,
who found an idea in the Puget Sound
backwoods and who proved it could work
in a time when nothing was working
in the Willamette Valley, Oregon.

Acknowledgments:

It is customary in this section of a manuscript to thank everyone who was helpful and who had the patience and good humor to let the author have his way most of the time. In a book that is based solely on research, it is particularly important that the reader realize who really put it together—most are listed below. Many others gave encouragement, prodding the author along when he became lazy, and they are too numerous to mention. Special thanks go to Bill Cox. Without his help many of the people interviewed would never have been found, and without his interest the book might never have got off the ground. And another special thank you to Pat Milligan (Milligan Stew) Carson, of Springfield, who was the first of dozens of former students to answer our plea in the newspaper for help.

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Author's Note

In 1973, as it was approaching the end of its first decade, Lane Community College looked backward to its roots. In many respects, Lane's roots are in the old Eugene Technical-Vocational School, a stepchild of the Eugene public school system that lasted 27 years, from 1938 to 1965. Farsighted persons at the community college decided that, in order for their foresight to be accurate and useful, a little hindsight might be in order. That's the reason for this book.

Operating for most of its existence out of a ramshackled old school building and student-built shops at Fourth Avenue and Madison Street in Eugene, ETVS was the first municipally-operated vocational school in the country.

It was also a place where marvelous things happened: The resurrection of a decayed, abandoned old school building into a vital, living institution; the time when Fred O'Sullivan looked up from his work building one of the school shops, spotted his girlfriend in the window, and got so excited he hit himself in the mouth with his hammer; Lillian Van Loan's Model A car, Bouncer, the only "staff car" the Eugene Vocational School had; the days during the war when ETVS—then simply EVS—operated around the clock and students and teachers alike went through class sessions standing at their desks so they wouldn't fall asleep; the day Eleanor Roosevelt stopped by for a visit; the day-in, day-out exhibition of Art Clough's genius; and most of all, the conversion of a farsighted man's dream into something very real, something that worked.

What follows is the result of two years of research and writing. It is a close look at the vocational school, the curious times in which it began, the heady success of the early years, its graceful middle age, and its quiet demise. It could only have been written with the support of the Lane Community College administration, former ETVS teachers and students, and dozens of cooperative persons throughout the state who simply were interested.

Foreword

In four years the Great Depression would be over, buried under a hundred thousand tons of bombs and the gutted remains of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, but in the gloom of a wet and cloud-grey December of 1937 the Depression still had Eugene on its knees.

Overseas things were not much better. United States and Japanese forces were already snarling at each other on the high seas and on mainland China, and in Europe the Second World War had started. For even the most optimistic, January 1938 was shaping up as a repeat of January 1937. It would not be a happy new year.

The new year would be even worse for the 2,500 unemployed young people who lived in the city. Unlike their country cousins who could always find something to do on the farm, the city kids had been all but demoralized by a childhood of depression.

Adults 23 and 24 years old were still called boys and girls by their parents because of a simple fact of life: they were out of work, had always been out of work, and weren't likely to find work. The Work Ethic still hung low over Eugene, depression or not.

They lolled around Seymour's at Tenth and Willamette or up at the bowling alley across the street. When they could find them they did odd jobs—splitting wood, running errands and the like. A few joined some of the federal programs and ended up building roads in the Cascades, dams on the Columbia and football stadiums in Roseburg.

Public education, strapped with problems of its own (like how to pay its bills), provided little help. Forced by the double whammy of circumstance and tradition,

public education was reluctant, or unable, or both, to go beyond the Three R's into specialized training.

Vocational education, or manual training as it was called in those days, was kept at a minimum and in some places ignored all together. Meanwhile, steady jobs required training.

No one knew that better than the unemployed youth of Eugene. What they needed was jobs, and what they needed to get the jobs was the training. And yet the training was not at hand.

No wonder Eugene's young people felt impotent. They were children of an impotent age.

Of course some efforts had been made by the federal government, all on a grand scale with typical Rooseveltian flair. The New Deal had spawned dozens of alphabet programs like the CCC, the WPA and the NYA. It may have been government by bailing wire and chewing gum, but in many ways it worked.

And here and there throughout the country were private and industry-supported "trade schools". But in most cases it was as difficult for a Eugene student to get into the Samuel Gompers Vocational School in San Francisco as it was for him to get into Harvard.

So as 1937 wound down, Eugene's young people continued to sit on their hands in front of the family radio and, in a delightful bit of American logic, made a ventriloquist act they could not even see the most popular radio program of the era.

At least Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy were working.

Working also was the state's young director of vocational education. In his office in Salem, 60 miles to the north, O.D. Adams huddled with Eugene school superintendent J.F. Cramer to iron out the final details of a unique project that would turn education around in the southern end of the Willamette Valley.

In a sense, the two men—along with a handful of other civic leaders in Eugene—were inventing the wheel. The spokes of that wheel eventually reached out across Oregon, the northwest, and finally, the world.

The leg work for the project had started in the fall of 1937 when seven state vocational education officials quietly circulated a lengthy questionnaire among the city's employers, service and fraternal organizations and trade unions. The questionnaire asked many questions but essentially it only asked one: what kind of training is needed to make the unskilled and unemployed youth of Eugene skilled and employed?

It was a question that had been asked many times before in many towns across the country. But often in anguish and frustration and seldom with a motive. Nowhere had it been answered.

It Eugene, it was answered. By late December the street-pounding, door-knocking and phone-calling had been completed and on the fourth day of 1938 the Eugene Register-Guard announced on one of its inside pages that there was a strong possibility that a vocational school would open in the city within 30 days and that it would be a cooperative venture between school district #4 and the state department for vocational education.

Two days later on January 6, the Register Guard said, "such a school can grow into the community's program of development, supplying those elements of skill and originality now lacking in many trades."

And so it went. On February 1, 1938, in a broken down old grade school at Fourth Avenue and Madison Street in Eugene, the Eugene Vocational School opened for business. It was to stay in business for 27 years.

Chapter 1

It boomed before it busted. The heady years of the Twenties had made millions of people rich and had created what eventually became the backbone of America—its middle class. There was money, there was progress, there were jobs, and there were even a few places where a thirsty man could buy a drink.

Technology was going crazy. Commercial radio was barely off the ground when radio with pictures was developed in a television lab in New York City. Airplanes were no longer curiosities; they were a major industry. Every week new machines, new appliances, new conveniences, and new gadgets were invented and in another week were sucked into the rampaging economy. America had changed to long pants.

In Orégon, technology boosted, if not revived from the dead, an entire industry. Logging. It is no secret that the virgin forests of Oregon had been spared the rape of Eastern lumber companies through a simple fact of life: They couldn't get here from there and if they did, they couldn't get back out again unless they carried the logs on their backs. Access to and from the state was controlled by the railroads which, for many years, were interested in exporting only one major wood product—railroad ties.

Art Clough, now 83, remembers what it was like. "By the time I got to Eugène, logging had been going on around here for years and years, but mostly by a lot of small family outfits.

"They cut the easy trees on the contour of the land, let the other ones go and then turned around and reseeded right away. In those days, all the hills around here looked like virgin timber.

"They did it that way because there wasn't any other way to do it. But in Washington (Clough and his family moved to a village near Bellingham in 1903), it was a different story. Big companies from the East moved in because it was cheaper—all the deep water ports—and started cutting down all the trees.

"I remember standing on a hill looking down into the harbor at Bellingham and watching clipper ships load

the lumber, mostly flooring for Australia, and then riding out into the country with my family and not seeing any trees. They'd cut them all down."

So, Oregon was ripe for technology. Rail lines were built into the woods. Freight rates became competitive. Fine deep water harbors at Coos Bay and Portland were developed. Logging and sawmill equipment became more sophisticated and thousands of men flocked to the woods and to the mills to feed the nation's lust for homes for its middle class.

At the bottom of the Willamette Valley, Eugene was showing signs of becoming a bustling little city. In many ways, it had all the trappings: breweries, street cars, large department stores, a public market, automobiles, a couple of radio stations, and several schools. In 1924 two new junior high schools were built, Roosevelt at 18th Ave. and Agate St. and Wilson at 12th Ave. and Madison.

And one of the city's most successful saloons, Luckey's Club Cigar Store, continued doing land office business.

The New York Stock Exchange should have been so lucky. As the country rolled into 1929, economists began fretting over danger clouds they saw on the horizon. Unchecked speculation was hurting the economy and many economists were predicting disaster if it wasn't stopped. Meanwhile, millions of Americans—many of them who didn't know a bear from a bull—continued to pump billions of dollars into the market. Some spent their life savings; others borrowed and spent money they didn't have.

Then, in October 1929, it all went down the drain. In the most cataclysmic day in the Market's history—a day called Black Tuesday—the euphoria and good times of the Twenties became a heap of scrap paper on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The party was over.

Almost. Bea Chapman of Eugene, whose husband worked for Southern Pacific most of his life, said it took awhile for the hard times to reach Oregon but when they did, they were devastating.

"Right away it didn't matter much," she said, "because it hit the East first. They were the worst off. It took most of a year before we felt it here...then there wasn't any work, no jobs.

"All the men was laid off and I can remember how they all used to hunt and fish to feed their families. There wasn't anything else for them to do."

The cities were the hardest hit. Tent-city "Hoover-villes" sprung up in most of the nation's bigger towns. The Hobo became a familiar figure wherever the trains rolled, and in Eugene, the economy ground nearly to a halt. Jobs and salaries were cut. In 1929 the school superintendent was paid \$5,000 a year. Seven years later the salary had dropped to \$4,500.

The educational system, like everything else, had been caught with its pants down. It had not kept up with the technological boom anyway, preferring to stick with the traditional Three R's and maintaining an almost across-the-board distaste for manual training.

Life never had been easy for proponents of manual training. Traditional educators recoiled in horror at the mere prospect of it.

"You spend money on manual training and you take money away from education" they used to say.

That back-of-the-bus attitude reached from the lowest to the highest levels of public instruction, leading to separate governing boards and directors and separate budgets. In the Twenties, when grass-roots public vocational training could have been a very hot item, training workers to cope with the giant advances being made in technology, it was all but flatly ignored. The entire manual training budget for School District #4 in 1929 topped out at \$2,000, but less than half that amount was spent. A year later it was cut in half.

Vocational education, however, did have its supporters. To the north, Washington had somehow hired a state school superintendent who felt career training was as important as the Three R's and proved it by building shops in most of the state's high schools and even a few junior highs. In no time, Washington was 20 years ahead of the rest of the nation in vocational education and likely would have stayed there except for a major revolt by the state's teachers. The superintendent was subsequently sacked and the shops were torn down as fast as they had been put up and Washington ended its brief love affair with vocational education.

And only a few hours away in Salem, there was a vocational education zealot named O.D. Adams. Adams (a Bellingham transplant who grew up with Art Clough in a backwoods hamlet in the heart of lumber country) was the young director of the State Board for Vocational Education.

"Our town was so small it only had one school," said Clough. "O.D. and I were about junior high school

age then...in a year or so we were supposed to transfer to the high school in Bellingham.

"Our teacher we had made a deal with the principal in Bellingham to teach junior high subjects that were transferrable. But the first thing he did was build us a shop—something that was practically unheard of in those days."

In fact it was so unheard of that when the principal in Bellingham heard of it he hit the roof and practically wouldn't let them in high school.

"But it didn't matter much anyway. O.D. and I had both decided that manual training—right along with your regular classes—would be the future of education.

"We would sit and talk for hours about it. We both wanted to be teachers and find some rich district somewhere where we could build shops to show people that learning how to work with your hands wasn't disgraceful, that you could do just about anything with machinery.

"I decided that I would set up a junior high school somewhere and turn it over to our teacher." Several years later, he did.

And several years after that he wound up in Depression-riddled Eugene working for his old school chum where both of them helped make a junior high school fantasy come true.

In the meantime, Eugene tightened its belt. Businesses operating on marginal profits soon didn't have even those, and closed down. Mills went on split shifts. Major employers cut back on their experienced help with the effect that an entire labor force—Eugene's young people—never actually grew up. Because they had never held a job, men and women old enough to vote were still called boys and girls. And the frustration *that* caused made the hard times of the Thirties even more difficult.

But difficulties were everywhere. By 1932, the Depression had a firm hold on the entire valley and showed no signs of letting up. Reluctantly, the school board closed two of its schools—Geary and Patterson—to save money and pared its operating budget to the bone. In 1934 manual training only received \$600 to be divided between Eugene High School and Wilson and Roosevelt Junior High Schools.

The Board noted the passing of Geary School, which was to play a major part in the eventual Great Experiment in Eugene, the Eugene Vocational School:



The original Geary School at Fourth and Madison was a victim of the Depression, was abandoned because it was too costly to keep open, then was finally re-opened in 1938 as home for the new vocational school. This photo probably was taken about 1900.

"The Geary Building...is located at Fourth Avenue and Madison Street and is being retained in condition for immediate reoccupation, if circumstances should make that necessary.

"It is in a high population area and was closed only as an emergency measure to reduce costs during the Depression days. Both Patterson and Geary schools are structurally sound and remarkably well-preserved."

Both schools were venerable reminders of times past in Eugene. Geary was built in 1899, only 34 years after District #4 was organized, and was followed in 1901 by Patterson.

In 1936—the year of a major measles epidemic in Eugene—Patterson School was demolished by the Sullivan Wrecking Company which was paid \$180 to haul it away.

It was also in 1936 that student enrollment in Eugene's six elementary schools, two junior highs and two high schools (Eugene High School and the experimental University High School) hit 4,000.

Until 1936, Eugene High School had kept its industrial arts program at the usual—almost negligible—low profile. But during that year, the Board of Education approved a request (after intensive lobbying by

high school officials) for a modest metalworking course to be added to the existing woodworking program at the school.

With a small state grant, the high school bought and installed a metal lathe in a new frame building adjacent to the school and for the first time ever, offered courses in cold metal, general home repairs, shaping, welding, and tool making. As a final class project, students were allowed to work with ornamental iron which was all the rage then in Eugene homes.

It wasn't exactly vocational education at its best, but it was a start.

Vocational education at its best, of course, was an impossible dream. There were few, if any, models to follow. The industry or union-affiliated vocational schools were rich, well-equipped and thorough. They were also a hundred light years away from anything a struggling local school district could afford.

A few Eugeneans lusted after a full vocational program for the city but ended up looking like children lined up outside a candy store, their noses pressed to the window. Men like Mahlon Sweet, Gilbert MacLaren (the school board chairman), Register-Guard publisher William Tugman, and others had become more and more aware that vocational education was vital to the economy.

If it had done nothing else, the Depression had taught many Americans that technology and the jobs it often seems to create does not take care of itself. Like a hungry animal, it needs to be fed.

In dozens of bull sessions during those middle-Depression years, Sweet, MacLaren, and the others tried to figure all the angles. Everywhere they turned there was an obstacle. Mostly it was money. Machinery has always been expensive. Then there was the question of sponsorship. The school district would probably go along with the idea of a fullfledged vocational education program if someone else would foot the bill. Again money. There was even some opposition—mostly in the form of apprehension—from the trade unions. Many of them were concerned that their professions would be glutted by a surplus of workers; others were worried about the quality of instruction. Everywhere they looked, they ran into a dead end.

But in mid-1937, a series of events caused a shift in the educational winds. Unexplainably, manual training expenses for District #4 jumped several hundred dollars, almost 25 percent over the previous year. More than \$500 alone went to Wilson Junior High School. In Salem, O.D.

Adams, a former public relations man, was making some strong political allies and had made several trips to Eugene to see his old school buddy Art Clough.

Then in a special Saturday morning session of the Board of Education, Victor P. Morris moved, seconded by Austin P. Dodds, to hire Dr. J. F. Cramer of The Dalles as the new superintendent of District #4. The vote was unanimous and Dodds moved he be contracted for three years at a salary of \$4,500 a year.

Cramer was an energetic administrator. He was also sympathetic to vocational education and began meeting socially and privately with Sweet, Tugman, MacLaren, and Adams to discuss the possibility of a district-owned but state-funded vocational school for Eugene.

Finally, the frustration of the past two years was ending. The countless discussions were paying off. Adams, with support from the Eugene contingent, bulled ahead with plans to start the school. As summer closed, he continued to beat a well-worn path between Salem and Eugene.

O. D. Adams was a practical man. He knew there would probably be stiff opposition from some parts of the community and he planned to fight it with statistics. He wanted to show beyond a shadow of a doubt that there was not only room, but also a need, for a vocational education school in Eugene.

What he needed, he said, was a survey.

In early fall, 1937, Adams hired the former head of the Grants Pass mining school, Winston Purvine, as his Administrative Assistant for Research and sent him off with six other vocational department supervisors to canvass Eugene.

Purvine is now president of the Oregon Institute of Technology and remembers the survey well.

"There were seven of us...we were all from some field of vocational education.

"Earl Cooley was supervisor of vocational agriculture education; Walter Morse was in trade and industrial training—they were all specialists in some field or trade.

"We started making the rounds in October 1937 after O. D. told us to hit at least 70 percent of the community, and that meant mills, stores, private homes, granges, clubs, labor unions, workers. Just about everybody.

"The survey itself was quite long. Eighteen pages I think. It was divided into two parts with the first part being of a general nature and relatively nonfocused and the second part more specific, dealing with exactly what kind of *things* needed to be accomplished in Eugene."

Purvine denied that the survey was stacked in favor of the vocational school, although sometimes it seemed that way.

"It seems to me that while we didn't come right out and ask whether a vocational school should be established, we did ask most people their opinions on *how* it could be established and specifically, *what* should be taught. On those questions we tried to get a cross-section of responses. Like we wouldn't stop with employers...as soon as we finished with them, we would ask their employees what they thought."

What they thought was exactly what O. D. Adams and the rest of the pro-vocational school people hoped they would. Although the results have since been lost, all indications point to strong support from the community. The school board was even beginning to talk about vocational education projects during their public meetings, approving a plan to host a state school for janitors in November and a WPA proposal to hold a school for house maids later in the month.

Still, however, the Board was keeping mum on the vocational school, preferring to discuss the topic during work sessions. In the meantime, chairman MacLaren worked closely with the state's survey team and presumably kept the Board posted on the team's progress.

In Salem, Adams was using some of his political muscle to twist a few legislative arms. He wanted money. The federal act that had established both the Federal and State Boards of Vocational Education in 1917 had made provisions for some matching government funds for such projects as long as state and local governments kicked in some too.

Adams wanted that money. As much as he could get. He also wanted equipment. As much of that as he could get. From the beginning, it looked like the money would be easier to find than equipment. Eventually, Adams would look to the school's teachers, and students, and finally, to the incredible resources of a nation at war.

But in the early winter of 1937, the status of the vocational school was still fairly "iffy". The survey was going well, but Adams and Cramer were anxious. With the

Christmas season approaching, stores would be staying open longer so Adams sent an order down to Eugene for the survey team to stay on the streets until the last merchant closed his shop.

There was talk between the two—and probably with the Board during private work sessions—that if all the hurdles could be crossed, the new vocational school could open by January. February at the latest.

The survey had already proved that more than 2,500 young people in the Eugene area were jobless, and proponents of the school figured a winter opening might help some of them find work by summer. More realistically, there were also political considerations to a January—or February—opening.

Many people in the community were still skeptical of vocational education in general and a public-supported vocational school in particular.

"We had to show them it could work," said Purvine. "O. D. and the others felt that four or five months of operation in the winter would prove to the community and the businesses that vocational education was effective."

Purvine and the others stepped up their work on the survey toward the end of December and by the end of the first week of January, Adams and Cramer felt it was safe to make some sort of public statement about the state's intentions.

On January 4, 1938, the Eugene Register-Guard published a short article outlining the objectives of the school, its location, and when it would open. It also let Adams have his say.

The ultimate public relations man, Adams went to great lengths to explain that the Eugene Vocational School—as it was to be called—would not displace workers from their present jobs as some craft unions feared and that "it is our aim to supply practical work wherever we find a real demand." As a clincher for money-conscious Eugeneans, Adams pointed out that the free tuition of the new vocational school would be an attractive alternative to expensive correspondence courses. Two days later the Register-Guard said in an editorial, presumably written by Tugman, that "such a school can grow into the community's program of development, supplying those elements of skill and originality now lacking in many trades."

Now that they had more or less "gone public", the school's organizers moved quickly.

On January 10, Board members Gilbert MacLaren, Victor P. Morris, Mrs. W. S. Love, Austin E. Dodds and Lloyd A. Payne heard Superintendent Cramer explain the agreement made by the District and the State. It was the first mention of the school made by the Board during a public meeting.

Cramer said, "The state proposes to engage teachers in the various trades and industries, and to expend for salaries during the balance of the present school year approximately \$12,000, providing the district will expend not to exceed \$1,500 for materials and tools necessary for putting the Geary Building in usable condition for immediate occupancy, the carpentry classes to do the work."

The board promptly endorsed the project. Austin Dodds moved "that the building committee be authorized to employ the services of an architect to examine the Geary Building from the standpoint of safety as well as the feasibility of spending any great amount of money for repairs, and if that is needed, to perform the repairs."

The motion passed unanimously.

Earlier that day in an office at 77 E. Broadway, the Eugene Vocational School opened a registration and counseling center for some prospective students—some as young as 14. The next day work began on the Geary Building.

It needed a lot of work. Years of neglect had hurt the old building. Windows were knocked out, shards of glass were scattered on the floors; vandals had splashed paint and obscenities on the walls; layers of silt and dirt were everywhere; generations of pigeon families had left their droppings, sometimes as much as three feet deep; doors were off their hinges. But O. D. Adams saw none of the filth and damage. He only saw what it could become.

With a handful of other supporters and organizers, Adams drove out to Fourth and Madison Streets in the drizzle of a January afternoon to look at his "new" building. The majestic, turreted old Geary School stood on the corner; pigeons fluttered in and out of the broken windows and called to each other from the cupola. The place was a desolate wreck.

Adams and the others brushed through the weeds and walked up to the front door, unlocked it, and went inside. For those who had known Geary in her prime, it was heart-breaking to see what had become of her. It would take a monumental amount of work to recondition the classrooms, to rebuild the plumbing system, to repair the wiring. It was almost too much to ask.

But Adams looked past all of that. "What nice rooms," he said, "what large windows. Look at all the light they let in. This will work fine. Just fine."

Adams had discovered fire in Eugene, and he wasn't about to let a few January rain clouds worry him.

It took two weeks and \$1,200 to recondition Geary. Crews crawled over, through, and under the building like ants. Outside, weeds were cut or pulled. Windows were installed. Most of the pigeons were scared off or exiled to the attic. Geary came back to life.

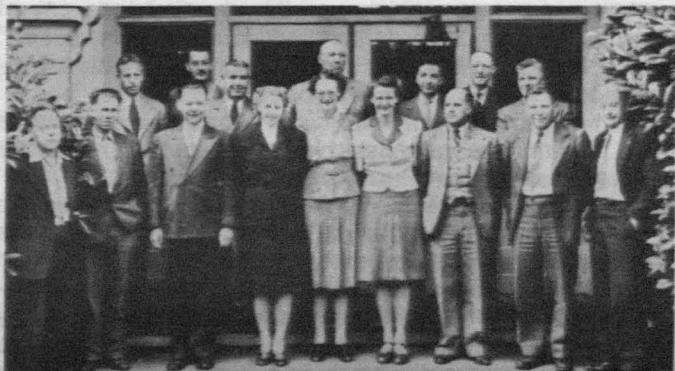
By the end of January 1939, the Eugene Vocational School was almost ready. About 30 students had indicated a desire to take either the part-time carpentry class or the personality development course—the only two courses that would be offered when school began. Things were shaping up. A February opening was definite.

A week or two earlier, Adams had picked his staff. Martin Johnson, a local carpenter, was hired as a part-time instructor for the carpentry class. And Lillian Van Loan, a former Adams assistant in Salem, signed on as the school's only full-time teacher for the continuing education/personality development class.

Lillian Van Loan would eventually lead the school through its most explosive years and establish it as a national model for vocational education.

She got her first taste of making the unemployable employable, oddly enough, in 1926 in the basement of the old Salem High School.

Early staff members and representatives from the State Department for Vocational Education gather in front of the Eugene Vocational School. Front row, left to right: Art Clough, Barney Eastlick, Winston Purvine (now president of Oregon Institute of Technology), Wilda Parrish, Mabel Phelps, Virginia Miller, Ray Cornelius, unknown, Chet Stevens; Back row: Dale Perry, C. B. Smith, Elmer Gifford, unknown, Roger Hougium, Merlin Lyons, unknown.





First director of EVS, Lillian Van Loan, escorting school superintendent J.F. Cramer through the drafting class.

The drop-out rate in Salem was high, and the unemployment rate among drop-outs was higher. That is a fact of life that has never changed.

In Mrs. Van Loan, O. D. Adams recognized a knack for reaching the socially and economically handicapped, a talent that he also recognized could be cashed in. She was, indeed, a natural. As a part-time instructor at the Continuing Education School tucked away in the Salem High School basement, Mrs. Van Loan quickly established herself as a "friend" of the students. She worked with them one at a time—possibly the first time any of them had been treated to "individualized instruction" which has since become the darling of educational innovators.

"O. D. had definite ideas about education," she said, "He felt everyone deserved an education, no matter what kind of education that might be."

To O. D. Adams, drop-outs were not losers and he transmitted that philosophy to his new protege. In no time she had turned her corner of the Continuing Education School into a bustling classroom and a homemade placement service. She built fires under her students; many returned to high school, others found jobs, and others learned for the first time how to get along and cope with society.

Along the way she stashed away a storehouse of impressions and thoughts on vocational education, its potential, its place in the educational scheme of things, and its impact on the working world. As she does today from her home in Corvallis, she recognized it as a legitimate and important function of education. In those days that was close to heresy. Less than 20 years later she would be honored as one of Oregon's leading educators.

But this was the late 1920s, a different age. In June 1928, she left the Continuing Education School to become principal at a private school in Medford where one of her students, David Sheldon, later went on to develop one of the first seismographs in the country.

Eventually her husband, Wendell, landed a job as principal of Roosevelt Jr. High School in Eugene and Lillian moved north again. Her timing couldn't have been better.

"I had heard through the grapevine that O. D. was setting up a vocational school in Eugene. That sounded so much like him," she said. "I was interested, of course, and wondered if there was anything I could do."

Indeed there was. It was almost as if the school had been made for her. Adams, who had spotted her talents a decade before in Salem, hired her on the spot.

So by the first week of February, all was ready. The Board wrote checks of \$35 to A. C. Dixon for rent on the downtown office which would be closed when the Geary Building opened and \$73.24 for "Supplies—Vocational School" to the Ford Nelson Mill Company. Other than those expenditures, the Board appeared content to let the state proceed as it wished.

The state proceeded. Adams had practically set up residence in Eugene as he tied the loose ends together. The survey had been filed away and Purvine was asked to stay on and oversee the school in Adams' absence after classes began and Lillian and Martin Johnson set up shop at Fourth and Madison.

On Feb. 1, a little over two weeks after the Register-Guard predicted its opening, Eugene Vocational School's time had arrived. Soon after the doors were unlocked in the morning, the first of about 20 unemployed young people drifted in and found a seat. In front of the room was Lillian Van Loan.

Soon the rest of the class had arrived and Mrs. Van Loan introduced herself and calmly said, "Shall we begin?"

Chapter 2

Those first few weeks went off without a hitch. Johnson and Mrs. Van Loan acted like they had been teaching at the Eugene Vocational School all their lives, and Adams was already thinking enthusiastically about expanding into evening adult classes immediately instead of waiting for the regular school year to begin the next fall.

He sounded out his friends on the idea and apparently found the support he was looking for. Although there wasn't a peep from the Board at its March meeting, Adams' habit of touching bases with everyone concerned points to the fact that he must have conferred with the Board members during their monthly work session.

One ally, the Eugene Register-Guard, thought it was a great idea and promptly reported that the Vocational School would soon be offering evening courses in welding, blue print reading, estimation for construction, billing and detailing, shop mathematics, theory of electricity and electrical codes, drafting, air conditioning and refrigeration, and diesel.

By then, Adams was fairly itching to start a night school. Classes, he decreed, would primarily be aimed at the already-employed workers who wanted to brush up on their skills or learn new ones to advance in their jobs or help them find new careers.

This was a whole new ball game.

Right away there was the problem of staffing. It was Adams' philosophy that to get the best you have to hire the best, so he directed Purvine to hit the streets again to find the best Eugene had to offer in the winter of 1938.

Purvine had a technique. "When I wanted to find a master tradesman in any one of the trades, I'd go into one of the shops around town and ask who they thought was the best tradesman around. I'd usually get a name or two then I'd go to another shop, a competitor, and ask the same question.

"It wasn't long before the same name, or sometimes two names, would keep coming up, and finally I'd go see this man and ask him if he wouldn't like to come and teach at the vocational school."

Usually he got what he wanted—at least for awhile.

"We had a pretty high turnover there for awhile," said Purvine, "because the best tradesman was not always the best teacher. Sometimes I'd have to go out and start all over again to find someone who could teach."

Anyone who has ever tried to learn a skill or craft can testify to the importance of being taught by a person who can unmystify the mysterious.

While Purvine was beating the bushes looking for instructors, the school put the word out it was looking for students to fill the new classes. It was a gamble. No one was sure whether people who had worked hard all day would be willing to give up their evenings to sit in a classroom. Adams and the others kept their fingers crossed while the Register-Guard continued to plug the program on its inside pages. And around town, a few workers here and a few workers there made plans to attend.

Some, like the painters and paper hangers union local, agreed to attend enmasse if an instructor could be found who could teach them wood graining and special effects. Purvine finally found one in Portland.

The big night drew closer. It was near the end of March, 1938 and the Eugene Vocational School was less than a month old, ready to take its first big step.

Adams was nervous as a cat for he knew that a failure here could damage the school beyond repair. It was on probation anyway, and one slip-up would be all the vocational education opponents (there was still a sizable force of them in Eugene) would need to start a campaign against the school.

Nobody remembers the exact date the night classes began; late March is the best guess. No matter. It only matters that on the night they did begin, Adams drove down from Salem for one last pep talk with his staff. Lillian Van Loan remembers it well.

"O. D. called us into one of the empty classrooms to tell us what he expected of us, and what we could expect from the students. He must have talked for ten or fifteen minutes from up in the front of the room. Those of us in the back could hear people shuffling around out in the halls, but O.D. couldn't. He was too far away.

"He finally finished talking and then looked at us for a second and said very sadly, 'well, it doesn't look like anyone is coming anyway'."

Adams was ready for the worst but he wasn't ready for what awaited him in the hallways of old Geary.

As the door opened and the staff filed out, the halls were jammed. More than 300 students had showed up, more than anyone had ever expected.

The gamble had paid off and the Eugene Vocational School had, in about one month, established itself as a presence in the community. Now it had some breathing room.

Success of the night program was vital in other ways too. There was a war going on in Europe and the economy here was picking up. A few more Help Wanted ads were appearing in the Register-Guard's classified section. Jobs—nonexistent for nearly a decade—were reappearing; mills added extra shifts, people were beginning to work again. The Depression—though still a dark cloud over the nation—showed ever-so-slight signs of weakening. The Eugene Vocational School was filled with people determined to beat the Depression at its own game—when it showed a weak spot, a trained worker would jump in.

And there was the matter of planning. Adams was a meticulous planner. The success of those first night classes gave him the edge he was looking for. In Salem, he again began moving in legislative money circles and on April 7 appeared before the Board of Education in Eugene to announce a \$2,000 increase in the operating budget.

The budget he passed among Board members MacLaren, Love, Morris, Dodds and Payne showed income of \$22,000, of which \$15,000 came from the State Department for Vocational Education, \$6,000 from student fees at \$20 each, and \$1,000 from a federal grant. Expenses included \$15,000 for salaries, \$5,300 for new equipment and \$1,700 for general supplies. The Geary School was valued at \$25,893.13.

At the same meeting, the Board informally approved a request by Adams and Cramer for the District to provide heat, light, power and water for the school from what then was called the Eugene Water Board.

By this time—late Spring 1938—Adams was pushing himself day and night. He, Mrs. Van Loan, Purvine and the others were already preparing for the opening of the next school year. The course list would be expanded, new teachers hired. More daytime classes would be held.

On the drawing board for fall 1939 were classes in aviation mechanics, barbering, clay modeling, copper smithing, custom dressmaking and millinery, hair-dressing, heating and ventilating, jewelry making, leather

craft, metal casting and spinning, model building, office training, plaster casting, plumbing, production principles, radio studio work, retail selling, and sheet metal.

Those, in addition to the current course offerings of poultry raising, nursery and green house, pruning, budding and grafting, photography, painting and decorating, home service (listed as the best "field of employment for young women, as the demand is greater than the supply"), radio, salesmanship, business training, auto mechanics, welding, work application and woodworking.

The staff was growing just as fast. Eventually, 22 full and part-time teachers would be on the staff in September 1938. Among them were Dot Dotson who would be coming back to teach photography; a young radio pioneer by the name of Roger Hougum was hired to teach radio; Grace Eldredge, a New York dress designer who had one worked at Bloomingdales, would head the dress making/millinery department; Eve Collins would teach work application; Catherine Lamb would help her; and to no one's surprise, O. D. Adams' old school chum Art Clough would be there to start a new department called Creative Design.*

At first glance, a creative design department seemed curiously out of place in a school specially geared for turning out auto mechanics and radio engineers, but over the next 18 years, it would prove itself as one of the school's most important departments as well as the most popular. Someone once asked O. D. Adams what the school would do when Art Clough left. Nothing, said Adams, there is nothing that could be done. There was only one Art Clough and he could never be replaced. When he retired in 1956, the department folded.

But a creative design department was just a gleam in Art Clough's eye when the first four months of Eugene's Great Experiment ended and the Vocational School closed up shop for the summer. Lillian Van Loan, who had originated EVS's one-woman placement service "for the benefit of all junior workers 16-24 years of age", reported to the Board that 180 jobs were located during the winter for some 200 applicants. Of those, she said, 62 were permanent, 75 temporary, and 43 were seasonal. The Board was delighted. In its summary of the first four months of operation of the Vocational School it said, "The Eugene Vocational School has expanded into a place of

*Art Clough was the Eugene Vocational School's "free spirit". Now over 80, he has become a definite presence in Eugene and his story deserves special attention. It is detailed in the appendix.

real service to the community and has attracted statewide attention and interest. Pupils have come from all parts of western Oregon to attend the classes," and "the only limiting factor of the school is the possibility of placement, and placement is the goal of all activities of the school."

The Board must have been delighted. When District expenditures exceeded the \$1,500 ceiling by \$655, and when Adams requested a second custodian be assigned to the building at a cost to the district of \$1,200, the Board didn't even blink. It simply signed the checks.

Curiously, however, the Board was still officially taking a wait-and-see attitude about endorsing the school's 1938-39 operations. It is one of those mysteries of a bureaucracy that while Adams and Van Loan were hiring teachers, planning a packed day and evening curriculum, and even drafting a student handbook, the Board had still not publicly given its blessing to a September opening. Only at its August 9 meeting, barely a month before school was to begin, did the Board do what it obviously had planned to do all along.

Adams appeared full of good news. The state he said, would pungle up another \$1,400 over the \$22,000 already committed for 1938-39, and the popular Lillian Van Loan would unofficially take over as the on-site director for the coming year. She had taken on an ever-increasing load of administrative duties anyway and Purvine was being transferred to Portland to open a counseling and guidance center.

Lloyd A. Payne rose and moved that the Board "heartily approve the plans...in assuming the superintendent take part in formation of policies of the Eugene Vocational School, approve all orders and requisitions for supplies and equipment, and consult with the State Department regarding the appointment of employed personnel on behalf of the Board, and assume the same relationship with regard to the Eugene Vocational School as to any other school in the District."

At the same meeting, the Board approved a \$482 bid by Jeppesen Brothers to paint the exterior of the Geary Building, spent another \$360 on insulation for the old building, and bought \$6.75 worth of magazines for the school.

The shakedown cruise was over and the Eugene Vocational School had just been commissioned for its maiden voyage. September was just around the corner and everything was ready. Everyone had had his say.

Everyone, that is, except one. His name was Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Chapter 3

The United States had never seen the likes of Franklin Roosevelt. A product of the New York aristocracy and a victim of polio—which made him the only physically handicapped president in the nation's history—Roosevelt attacked the depression with a vengeance. Modifying his cousin Theodore's campaign slogan "Square Deal" into the "New Deal", he revolutionized the role of the federal government in national politics and the national economy.

Other presidents—Jefferson, Lincoln, Polk, Jackson and Monroe come to mind—had flexed a certain amount of federal muscle in domestic affairs, but, with the exception of Lincoln, had limited it mostly to what Andrew Jackson like to call "Manifest Destiny", a public relations term the Indians and Mexicans called more appropriately, the rape of the land. Even cousin Teddy had pushed for federal control of millions of acres of wilderness and forest land for national parks.

But FDR was something else. As the Depression swept across the land and the economy tumbled like so many toy building blocks, Roosevelt initiated sweeping reforms in government and began the unheard-of practice of federal takeover of private enterprise.

That was just the beginning. The Depression was just hitting its peak in the early and mid-Thirties when Roosevelt made his most dramatic move, the Work Projects Administration. In the WPA, the federal government became once and for all the nation's largest employer.

Almost instantly, millions of unemployed men and women were put to work in thousands of government-funded projects. The Grand Coulee and Hoover/Boulder Dams were built on the Columbia and Colorado Rivers.

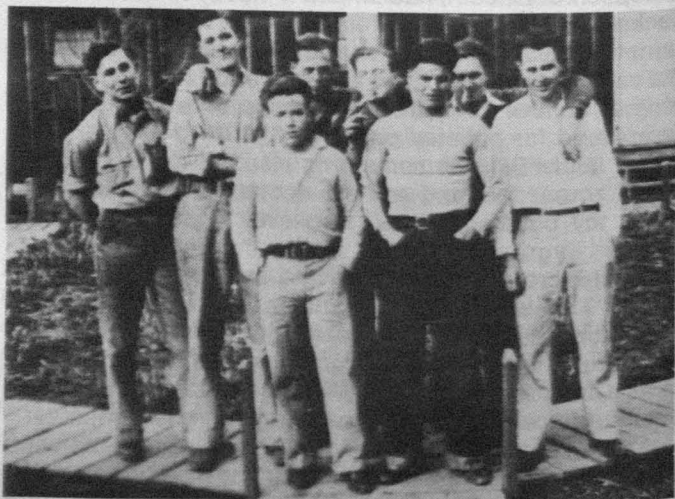
Timberline Lodge went up on Mt. Hood. Bridges appeared everywhere, including a very special span across the Mississippi from Illinois to Hannibal, Mo., the boyhood home of Mark Twain. Roosevelt personally attended to the dedication of that bridge.

Closer to home, the WPA was active all up and down the valley. In Eugene, WPA workers built Civic Stadium on South Willamette St. and operated a day-care center during the first few months of the Eugene Vocational School's trial period in the winter of 1938, then moved it in 1939 from Geary to a new building on Blair Blvd.

Success of the Work Projects Administration led to a number of subordinate agencies. The Civilian Conservation Corps was probably the most famous, and for a few years a CCC camp was located north of Skinner Butte in what is now Skinner Butte Park.

Another, less noted agency of Roosevelt's alphabet soup administration, was the National Youth Administration, created in the late Thirties specifically to help train the millions of out-of-work teenagers in America. In its early years, the Eugene Vocational School was affected as much by the NYA as it was in 1956 by Sputnik.

Over the years the National Youth Administration camp at Skinner Butte supplied hundreds of students from throughout the state. Many of them, including Lorie Cross (front row, center, with hands in pockets) stayed on after the war and became permanent Eugene residents. Camp Skinner Butte was originally a Civilian Conservation Corps camp but was turned over to the NYA in the late 1930s.



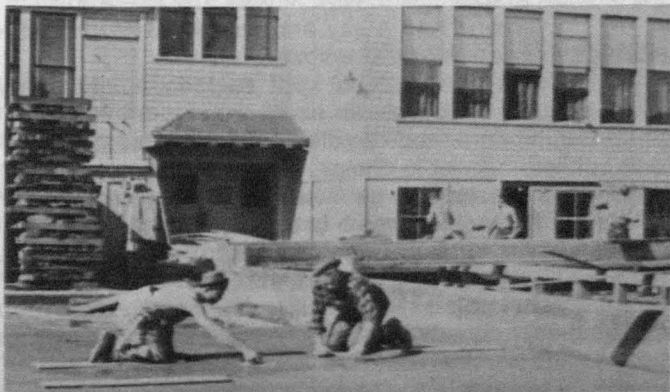
Built in to the philosophy of the National Youth Administration was an all-encompassing, almost singular goal: vocational education. Economists were predicting better times ahead—the war in Europe was already creating more jobs at home—and the federal government was determined to provide the trained manpower for those jobs from a previously ignored labor pool, the nation's young.

The timing couldn't have been better. The Eugene Vocational School, in spite of its early success during the winter trial period, still faced some potential problems. If Adams' optimistic efforts at dramatically expanding the school's curriculum fell on its face, the school could be seriously hurt. What he needed was a dependable source of students to keep enrollment up. That's exactly what he got from the NYA.

He also got a bonus. In addition to their education, NYA students were required to work at least 50 hours each month on "local projects" during their stay in the program.

What that meant to the Vocational School was that living practically next door was not only a perpetual supply of students but also a seemingly inexhaustible supply of free labor. During the next few years, NYA students would make every major addition to the vocational school including the auto, metal and aviation shops and many early repairs to the Geary Building. All for a monthly federally-paid salary of \$16.

Laying floors for war surplus buildings to be added to the Geary School. With the trowel is Fred O'Sullivan, a retired Eugene fireman. O'Sullivan and the others were all members of the National Youth Administration camp at Skinner Butte, and all were EVS students.



Not much, even by Depression standards, but enough at least to buy a quart or two of Old Grain beer from time to time and to treat your girl to a dance at the union hall above the Oregon Outdoor Store.

The NYA came to town in 1938. Fifty-two unemployed boys—mostly straight off the farm—were trucked in during a bitterly cold winter's night and dropped off at the rickety old CCC barracks at Camp Skinner's Butte.

Fred O'Sullivan remembers that "there was snow on the ground. It was very cold and when we went into the barracks they told us if we wanted a mattress to sleep on that night to fill our ticks with straw which was piled up in a corner.

"The boys that got there first were the lucky ones. Each building had only one woodburning barrel heater right in the middle of the floor, and that was the only place you could get warm, near the barrel.

"And, of course, once the heaters got going, they melted the snow on the roof and water started leaking in. You'd just get settled down when a leak would start. I think we spent all night just moving around from one dry spot to another."

Life during the days of the National Youth Administration camp at Skinner Butte was disciplined. In many ways it had all the trappings and feel of an Army boot camp, and in other ways it was Boys Town.

Lorie Cross, who got to the camp from his home in Lafayette by hitching a ride on the back of a flatbed truck, said he's never seen anything like it.

"We had a system there I've never seen anywhere else, and the amazing part about it is, it worked. We elected our own representatives to the camp government, we elected a sheriff, a mayor...it was just like a town.

"Everyone had a say and everyone had responsibilities to keep things shipshape."

Things were indeed kept shipshape, mostly by camp director Bill Lyons, an ex-warden from the Oregon State Penitentiary, and the chief cook and roustabout, a man called "Sailor". Sailor could easily have been typecast in the movies as a hardnosed top sergeant or crusty old Navy chief, which is exactly what he had been for several years. Many NYA boys had run-ins with Sailor, but O'Sullivan was one of the first.

"The first job I had when I got to camp was to mop the kitchen area every day after meals. Anyone who's been in the service will know what that's like.

"The guys in the barracks who had the floor detail would always grab the mops—there were about a dozen

of them—on Friday night and hide them so they'd be done early on Saturday morning and be allowed to go to town for the afternoon. I was still green and hadn't figured out what was going on, so on the first Saturday I was supposed to work, I looked around and—no mops.

"I went in to Sailor's little office and told him I couldn't mop the floor without a mop and what did he intend to do about it. Sailor just said, like he would have in the Navy, 'You will mop that floor with or without a mop', period.

"I told him where he could go and went to see Bill Lyons. He told me to go back and tell Sailor to order 12 more mops and I could go on into town if I wanted."

Sailor was furious that O'Sullivan had gone over his head but eventually forgot about it and the Great Mop Crisis passed. Meanwhile O'Sullivan had become notorious because of the fearless way in which he had stood up to Sailor and was elected camp sheriff.

As sheriff, O'Sullivan patrolled and helped police a camp that had grown to 125 boys (a girls NYA camp would soon be in operation on the east side of the Butte), sometimes by himself and sometimes with the help of a "deputy" who invariably was the winner of a recent boxing match in the champ ring. "We were all pretty good fighters in those days," remembers Jack Dingman, "the Elks always tried to get some of our boys to come down for their smokers."

The Elks weren't the only people in Eugene who wanted to cash in on the presence of the National Youth Administration. EVS, of course, was first in line; Mrs. Van Loan could hardly wait to get her aviation and auto body shop. And then there was the Army Corps of Engineers, which was about to turn a huge basin west of Eugene into Fern Ridge Reservoir.

The only problem was that there was a forest in the way. It had to go, said the Corps, so the entire NYA camp turned out with crosscut saws and turned the forest into firewood. Only later did they find out what the clearing project was for and today several of them claim that Fern Ridge, now a popular swimming and boating lake, would be free of stumps had they been told earlier. "Heck, we could have taken those stumps out if they had told us," one of them said.

NYA's impact was definitely being felt in Eugene. Not surprisingly, there was a certain amount of backlash felt too, a resentment that eventually resulted in spotted criticism of the vocational school. "It's become a government school", the critics said. "Our local boys and girls

can't get in because of all the outsiders. It's that Roosevelt, that's what it is."

Hindsight being what it is, of course, EVS was not a government school—though a great deal of federal money was poured into it over the years—nor was it's enrollment restrictive. It was conceived as a local school for local students—a point the Register-Guard and Mrs. Van Loan continued to make throughout the pre-war years. True, Adams had encouraged the local Board to open the school's enrollment to students from throughout western Oregon, but with so much state money involved in the project, even that rider was understandable and the Board went along with it.

But these were volatile, very political times. Eugeneans were descended from midwest and downeast stock, fiercely independent people who were likely to look twice at any project or program that added yet another federal finger to their local pie. While they generally were willing to accept the NYA's presence in town—even welcome it—many of them remained suspicious of how much effect the NYA would have on the vocational school. As it turned out, they need not have worried.

The NYA had a huge, almost incomprehensible impact on the school—all of it positive. NYA students fed new ideas, new perspectives into the classroom. They were hard workers, sometimes working all night to meet a deadline. They were good students ("The whole philosophy of the NYA was centered around school," said Lorie Cross. "If there was ever a matter of conflict—work or school—school won out. That's why we were there.")

Why they were there became evident in September 1938. Adams and Mrs. Van Loan had scurried around and hired 22 teachers for the beginning of fall term, among them Art Clough, who had finally found his "Golden Age" (see appendix). Even old Geary was getting a once-over. The Board, apparently caught up in the enthusiasm of the new year, the *first* year, unanimously approved more than \$900 to spruce up the building. Jessee Godlove was awarded \$261.50 for his bid to replumb Geary, and G. H. Latham received a check for \$657 to paint the building's interior.

On the first day of school, 1938, several hundred students (the exact number is unavailable) showed up for classes and were promptly handed a student handbook. It spelled out exactly where they were and what was expected of them.



Tune-up students in the auto shop at Geary.

From the Forward: "No effort has been spared to establish for the Youth of Eugene and Oregon a vocational school that meets the great need for training. The Eugene Vocational School selects students for various fields carefully, trains them thoroughly, and assists them in finding positions.

"It is the hope of the State Board for Vocational Education that the youth of this area will make the most of the opportunity offered by this school, (signed) Mr. O. D. Adams, director of the State Board for Vocational Education."

Following was a list of VIP's every student was expected to be familiar with: J. F. Cramer, superintendent of District #4, Charles A. Sprague, governor, Floyd Githens, local Apprenticeship Commission chairman, and commission members Githens, J.F. Ford, W.R. Worden, Howard Fish, Cramer, and Mrs. Van Loan.

And then a Statement of Aims and Policies:

1. "To provide training for the normal young men and women in this area, fitting them to hold satisfactory beginning positions."

2. "To instill in them the necessity for fair dealing and cooperative understanding for both employer and employee."

3. "To give them sufficient background and knowledge of occupational trends to allow them to make an intelligent decision of the field they wish to follow. Also



Students in one of Mabel Phelps' sewing classes.

to give them a comprehensive understanding of their own abilities and capacities."

4. "To assist young people in finding positions to which they are adapted both by aptitude and training."

The handbook goes on, outlining a few "pertinent facts": "The Eugene Vocational School allows young men and women 17 years or older (note: since at that time there were no age requirements for public schools, some students were as young as 14) who are serious in the desire to have training that will fit them for a definite occupation. These young people must be normal in their ability to grasp training and comply to the standards set for each department. Young people may come to this school from all parts of Oregon.

"This school offers training in trades, crafts, and skills, depending upon the aptitudes and interests of the student body and upon the possibility of jobs in the area.

"The instructors are successful men and women from the trades. They must have been engaged in their own occupation for the past seven years and must have the rating of a foreman or better. They must be recommended by others in the same city, engaged in the same occupation.

"Placement is the objective of the vocational school."

Then, for their monthly \$2 "materials fee" (there was no tuition), students were told what classes were available. Among them were poultry raising, photography, home service, radio, salesmanship, business training, auto mechanics and others.

And finally, a pep talk: "You are a privileged person if you have been admitted to the Eugene Vocational School. Only a limited number of young men and women have this opportunity. Make the most of it. Show your appreciation from day to day by getting the most out of your training. Remember, you only get out of life what you put into it, and this is equally true here in this school.

"Develop a job attitude: the most successful students in the school have been those (remember, EVS already had four months of classes under its belt, not including a tiny summer school program) who constantly maintained a business-like attitude. These were the young people who found the positions when they finished their training.

"Small things go into the making of such an attitude as this. Some of these things are: entering the building with that air of going places! Going immediately to work (if you were not 17, you wouldn't be here—act accordingly); being courteous always, working hard and accomplishing much, expecting a good deal of yourself each day; business firms are sorry, but work must go on whether or not you have a headache. (If you have too many, they are no longer sorry, they just get new help)."

The handbook ended with a few instructions on how you could get there from here. "The city bus line is on Fifth Street. The bus that runs every half hour connects with all other bus lines. The fare is 7 cents, or tokens may be purchased entitling the holder to four rides for 25 cents. Time schedules may be secured from the driver."

And with that, the Eugene Vocational School was open for business.

From there, weeks, months, even years are blurred for many people who were there from the beginning. We are all like that. We can tell you what we were doing when our father died, or who we were with when the war ended, but the small details of life became stashed away in the attics of our minds. From time to time we sort through them and find a yellowed photograph of a face we once knew, a place we once were, a friend we once had, but they are elusive to us. We were all so much younger then.

It is clear, however, that three people of the two or three dozen major figures involved were in the thick of

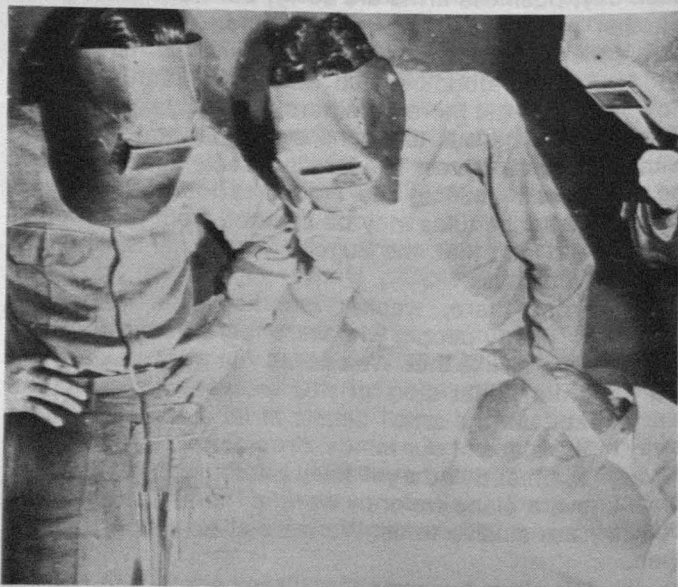
things those first few months: Adams, Mrs. Van Loan, and Art Clough.

Adams was like an expectant father. He was professionally and philosophically committed to the Eugene Vocational School; his whole career was riding on it. He was still walking around with the same educational commitments he had made a quarter of a century before in Bellingham.

To Adams, the word "education" was not complete unless it had the word "comprehensive" in front of it. He felt education, vocational and otherwise, should be accessible to everyone. Catherine Lamb once said that Adams dreamed dreams far ahead of his time, and that one of those dreams was the development of a school, a diverse school, where a student undecided about what he or she wanted to be in life, could easily shift from one goal to another. Mrs. Van Loan remembers a time, somewhere in the early Forties, when a vocational education expert from Georgia visited EVS and Adams, Lillian, and Mahlon Sweet were showing him around.

"All at once O. D. stopped," she said, "and he just looked around for a minute. Then he said, 'You know, we

Welding students.



should be able to have a complete educational facility someday, a place where vocational training and higher education could be under the same roof." The community college movement and O. D. Adams missed each other by less than 20 years.

During those first few weeks of classes in the fall of 1938, Adams hung around EVS every time he could get away from the office in Salem. His devotion to, and the state's financial investment in, the school had already ruffled a few feathers among vocational educators throughout the rest of Oregon and he realized he would soon have to back off some and let the school move along more or less by itself. But Adams, loaded with the foresight that marks an excellent administrator, had bought some insurance.

In Lillian Van Loan, he had a ringer. Since the old days at the Continuing Education School in Salem, Mrs. Van Loan had broadened her own experiences in education and become a good administrator herself. And she had also become something of a marvel at working with people, a talent that got its first real test after the school opened.

As a rule, most of the trade unions in town favored the vocational school. Purvine had discovered in the survey that most tradesmen were eager for trained workers as long as (a) the workers didn't threaten their jobs, or (b) drop the bottom out of the already low pay scale by flooding the market with surplus labor.

That was expected. And Adams, in his initial statement to the press when the vocational school was still in the planning stages, went to great lengths to calm the unions' fears.

But a business agent for one of the locals wasn't buying any of it. He staunchly opposed EVS from the start and would not cooperate with Mrs. Van Loan when she asked for his union's backing.

She went to see the man. Nowhere. She wrote. Nothing. She went to see him again. Same story. Finally she said, "I don't care what you say, I'm going to your next meeting and talk with the other members."

"If you do," he said, "I'll have you thrown out."

At the local's next regular meeting, she was there 15 minutes early, greeting the men as they came into the room, explaining who she was and why she was there. The business agent showed up to start the meeting, noticed Mrs. Van Loan in a corner, and told one of the union men to escort her from the room.

Several men protested, "We want to hear what she has to say", "yeah, let her stay."

She stayed and convinced them that the vocational school was more likely to help their trade than hurt it, but that she needed their help as much as she felt they might need hers. There was no question about it. They overwhelmingly voted to give the school all the support it needed. Even her old antagonist, the business agent, seemed convinced and agreed to teach at the school, ending up as one of the most successful members of the staff and one of her best friends.

The story, however, has a bizzare ending. Mrs. Van Loan remembers that "It wasn't long after all of this before I received an anonymous phone call telling me not to train union workers.

"I ignored it, even though it seemed strange; but soon another call came, and then another. Then I got two letters, both anonymous, telling me again not to train union workers.

"I ignored them too. But then a third letter came, threatening to put sand in all the machinery if the school didn't stop training union labor. That's when I got worried and turned the letter over to the FBI, because we were using a great deal of government machinery."

FBI agents went to work immediately and soon had their man. It was her friend, the business agent. During all that time—even as a highly successful teacher—he apparently was still frightened by the vocational school and what he thought it meant to the future of organized labor.

The Eugene Vocational School did, of course, train union workers. A few at first, then a few hundred, and then thousands. Eventually, the unions would strike an outright partnership with EVS to establish an extensive post-war apprenticeship program.

But back to 1938. With Adams attempting to spend less and less time at the school, Mrs. Van Loan soon found herself as EVS's chief administrator in spite of the fact that for official purposes O. D. continued as director.

It was Lillian Van Loan, not O. D. Adams, who had to telephone Fred O'Sullivan at the NYA camp to ask his help in getting wayward NYA boys in line. It was Lillian Van Loan, not O. D. Adams, who had to cope with the drop-outs from Eugene High School which had given up on them as losers and banished them to EVS. And it was Lillian Van Loan, not O. D. Adams, who finally convinced

them to return to high school to pick up academic credits they would need to help them complete their vocational training.

It was Lillian Van Loan who ran the Eugene Vocational School.

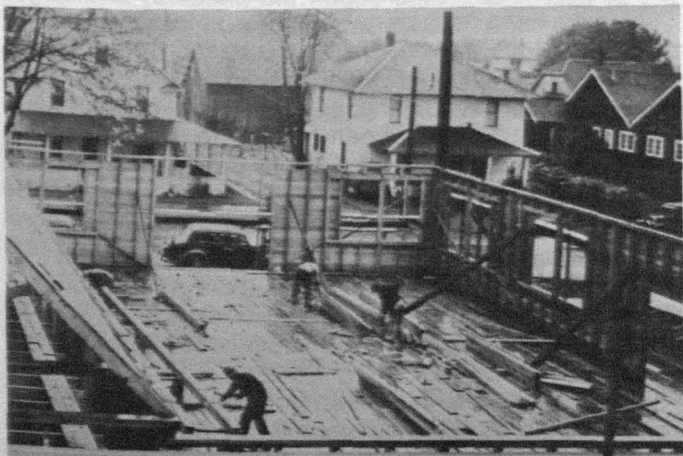
Well, part of it. There was a part of it that belonged to someone else, a little man who remembers passenger pigeons and clipper ships, who remembers looking for a "golden age" in America and then remembers finding it in Eugene. His name is Art Clough.

Art Clough was, and still is, a genius. It is not mere coincidence that the Eugene Vocational School was called the Eugene Vocational School and not the Astoria Vocational School or the Salem Vocational School. Much of the credit goes to the wood carver from Bellingham.

Clough was Adams' advance man. His close ties with Adams, stretching back to boyhood when the two dreamed of the potential of vocational education, influenced O. D.'s preference for Eugene as the site of his Great Experiment. Clough had made something of a name for himself among local lumber interests in the late Twenties and Thirties—a relationship that would pay off handsomely in the years to come.

He had also decided that Eugene was the site for the elusive "golden age" that he had searched for from the turn of the century. Not since his days at the foot of

Working in the rain with donated lumber, carpenters fashion a new shop at Geary.



"New York Mountain" in central Washington (see appendix) had Clough felt better about a place to live and work, and he passed that feeling along to Adams.

At 47, Art had still not reached the peak of his career. In fact, his new career had barely begun. Though he had not been in a classroom in many years, Clough threw himself into his work at the Eugene Vocational School in 1938 like he had never been away. He fought with the pigeons for space and fought with the custodians to maintain what Catherine Lamb called "orderly disorder" in his classroom.

Clough was the creative design department; it was made for him, partly as a concession to Adams' philosophy that a total education includes attention to the Three R's and the arts as well as vocational training, and partly to allow Clough to prove to skeptics that art can play an important role in industry.

In the years following 1938, Clough's creative design department proved it beyond all expectations.

Considering they were doing something that had never really been done before, the staff and students of the new Eugene Vocational School got through that first year without a scratch. The shops in the basement and on the first floor were humming day and night. NYA students were working hundreds of man-hours shoring up walls and patching holes on the second floor. Plans were being made for more shops to be added by the beginning of the next year.

The work application program began, headed by Eve Collins. Work application, described by Cramer as "including learning how to interview employers, how to qualify for a job, how to secure a job, and how to keep a job. It also includes individual work in weaknesses of the applicant, such as spelling, arithmetic, writing, etc.", was another Adams/Van Loan effort to involve "total education" at the Eugene Vocational School. They and the rest of the staff felt that training someone simply how to rebuild an automobile was not enough.

Indian summer ended and the Board realized that the rains were coming, and on October 19 approved a recommendation from Mrs. Van Loan to cut a driveway to the west side of Geary so the automobile repair classes could be inside.

Other areas of the school were expanding too. The carpentry classes had already run out of things to do by the end of 1938, so on Dec. 7—three years before Pearl Harbor—Board member Victor Morris moved that

carpentry students be allowed to seek out special projects, such as private home construction, as long as the trade unions didn't mind.

And a week later, the Board heard state NYA director Ivan G. Munro say that the NYA would furnish one-half of all material costs in addition to all labor costs to build a new shop. The Board agreed to match the \$600 federal grant, but balked at a request by Adams for more local money for a larger building. "If they want a bigger building," said the Board, "they'll have to pay for it." Adams was testing the Board, but it wasn't budging.

Growth was so rapid and programs were being added or expanded so quickly that often the supply couldn't keep up with the demand. Or the cash on hand.

Supplies came from everywhere. Teachers scrounged materials from their union buddies or from stock-piled industrial hand-me-downs. Art Clough used his contacts in the lumber industry for free wood. The state shipped in equipment from shops throughout the state—leading to further grumbling from vocational teachers who were afraid the Eugene school was receiving too much attention. Local merchants donated or loaned materials. Even the U.S. Army got into the act. Crates of Army surplus tools, still packed in cosmoline, were routinely shipped to the school and checked out to NYA students who had not bought their own.

By this time, the NYA had integrated itself firmly into the school and the community. The old CCC barracks were gone—torn down by the students themselves and replaced by modern apartments. A girls' NYA camp had begun in a rambling old house on the east side of the butte and soon camp life had added another dimension: a social life. Such as it was.

"Most of us were from straight off the farm," said Lorie Cross, "and knew next to nothing about the social graces.

"They'd have dances in the secretarial area at the school—we'd have to push all the desks out of the way first—but we were all pretty slow about mixing. Most of us didn't know how.

"All the teachers would show up, even Mrs. Van Loan, and help us get things going. One time I was dancing with this girl—neither of us were doing very well, so one of the counselors pulled me aside after the music stopped and said, 'Don't dance three feet apart like that. When you dance with a girl, you've got to put your arm around her and hold her close. Now go out and try it again.'

"I looked around and then went over and asked Tina Fergusson, the director of the girls camp, if she wouldn't mind dancing. I was holding her close like he said and looked over at the counselor to see if I was doing it right. He was just standing there shaking his head and had this look on his face like, 'not with the camp director, you idiot!.' "

Dances at the school and at the Union Hall downtown helped bring the boys' and girls' NYA camps together and, as might be expected, produced several romances. At least nine marriages were recorded between the two camps during their four years at Skinner's Butte. One of the grooms was Fred O'Sullivan who met his wife while he was climbing a tree.

"A bunch of us were playing football when a friend of mine says, 'Hey Sully, let's go around to the other side. I want you to see this new girl. But she's really shy so when we get there, you'd better climb up a tree and hide. You can see her when she comes out on the porch with my girlfriend.'"

"So, I climbed up the tree but, of course, when she came out of the house my friend said, 'Hey, I want you to meet a guy', and there I was, stuck. She stood there kind of embarrassed for what seemed like hours and then said, 'Well, you might as well come down and talk.' "

O'Sullivan later found out that romance also has its own peculiar occupational hazards.

"We were building a shop, I can't remember which one, when I looked up and saw my future wife watching me from one of the windows across the way. I got so distracted I hit myself right in the mouth with the hammer."

Like everyone else at the vocational school, the NYA students had to improvise.

During that first year—and throughout the Forties—most students were expected to make their own machine parts and in some cases their own tools. The Eugene Vocational School never was a particularly rich school. Its expenses for 1938-39, for instance, totaled only \$27,590 including almost \$18,000 for salaries. Supplies and operational expenses came to only \$4,000.

Such shoe-string budgets created a rather stark fact of life for EVS students and staff: If you wanted a work bench, or a child care center, or a new furnace, or a radio studio, or a new welding shop, you built it yourself. Even Lillian Van Loan went that first year without a desk until Martin Johnson and Ray Cornelius built her one from

an old Black Walnut tree that had stood at the corner of 13th and Oak.

The emphasis on improvisation, of making do and of scrapping for every dollar in an economy where there weren't many dollars, touched them all. Particularly the students. Frankly, most students didn't have a dime.

And no one was more aware of the plight of the students than Mrs. Van Loan.

"It wasn't long after we started that we realized something would have to be done for these students, some sort of financial aid program.

"We started looking around for a way to raise money and realized we would probably have to do it ourselves. So we did."

Mrs. Van Loan has a way of understating things. The beginnings of the Eugene Vocational School's financial aids program was significant for several reasons. It was typical of the school—a bootstraps operation that said in essence: "No one else is going to do it for us, therefore, we must do it for ourselves." Doing it for themselves amounted to realizing they were sitting on possibly one of the most productive gold mines in the city, and then turning that gold mine into cold, hard cash. In other words, a giant garage sale.

Students and teachers worked overtime turning out items for sale—household goods, gadgets, art work, tools, spare parts, anything they thought would sell. They were understandably nervous about the sale; not only was it a chance to raise a few dollars, but it was also the first opportunity the school and the citizens of Eugene had had to meet face to face.

But if anyone lost any sleep over it, they needn't have bothered. The sale was a smashing success. Merchandise went like hotcakes and the visitors were impressed. So impressed that from that time on, the special financial aids fund never faded.

The vocational school had made its place in the community. Even die-hard zealots who had opposed the school on grounds that vocational education was a waste of time were admitting its legitimacy.

Its first year had been one of growth, of settling in, and of riding out the tail end of the Depression. Looking ahead, school officials were predicting continued growth. They promised more programs, more placements, more services. They anticipated that more students from other areas of western Oregon would find their way to Eugene, and that the Eugene Vocational School would soon serve



This child care center was remodeled by EVS students and staff members in a private resident across the street from Geary, fronting Madison.

as a model for similar schools throughout the state, even the nation.

But as the year ended, few of them realized that within another year the Eugene Vocational School would be turned around, that the quiet and determined little school in a small town on the Willamette River would suddenly be propelled into the position of a national leadership and that things at Fourth and Madison would never be the same again.

Even those with their ears to the ground could never have guessed what would happen.

The Eugene Vocational School was on the verge of growing up in a hurry. Almost overnight.

Enter World War II.

Chapter 4

"In these troubled times, the world is realizing more than ever before that one of the first lines of defense for any country is the system of public education. In totalitarian states, the entire educational system is devoted toward instilling one particular philosophy of government and economics into the minds of the next generation. They strive for conformity to the prevailing ideology, for docility and obedience to whomever may be in power; for willingness to give up all individual rights and privileges for the sake of the state." J. F. Cramer, 1939.

J. F. Cramer was one of those with his ear to the ground. And what he heard was alarming.

From Berlin to Tokyo, the world was falling apart. It was summer 1939 and in less than a year, Hitler would invade the Low Countries and the fight would be on. The United States and Japan had already exchanged blows on the high seas and in China.

As an educator, Cramer was particularly nervous. His articulate and timeless message to the citizens of Eugene (above) reflected what was regarded as Standard Operating Procedure in totalitarian takeovers: activities that touch the human spirit or mind are always the hardest hit, the first to go. Almost universally, they are the press, religion, and education.

Cramer was expecting the worst in 1939. A realist, he knew that the American economy—even though picking up slightly as the decade neared an end—was still weak. Ten years of disease leaves its mark. But if Cramer was concerned about the ability of the American economy to rebound soon enough to cope with the possibility of war, he was doubly concerned about what the Depression had done to the American people. Virtually an entire generation of Americans had grown up during Hard Times, and another generation had been unmercifully trampled by it.

Between the lines of his 1939 message to Eugene, he was pleading for the strength, common sense and support he was sure would be needed if the war—as he suspected—eventually reached the United States.

If and when the war came, there would be no time to second-guess priorities. No time at all. Cramer would have agreed with John Steinbeck who once wrote of time, "Time, Time, that awful Bastard Time".

There was indeed, very little time left. The honeymoon was almost over.

The Eugene Vocational School was racing against time. Summer was passing quickly and there still was much to be done. Enrollment would be up again and paperwork had increased to the point where additional staff members were being hired. A secretary, hired at \$75 a month, was put on the payroll. Roger Hougum, an early Eugene radio enthusiast, joined the staff and started the radio department. Hougum was doubly valuable because of his fine working relationship with Howard Baker, head of the University of Oregon psychology department. Over the years, the two of them worked out an excellent series of aptitude tests.

Like many departments that were born as much from enthusiasm as they were from lack of materials, the radio department started life with only six meters, a few old donated radios, a tube tester and some hand tools. In a year, however, it would join aviation mechanics and creative design as the heart of the vocational school's war effort.

Radio servicing class, taught by Roger Hougum.





Paint and Dope Shop Off-Reservation Training Insignia making section of work.

Aviation mechanics was also new. And like the radio department, aviation started with little. There was no money and it seemed there was even less equipment. Finally, Yale Smith, a local amateur flier and EVS staff member for several years remembered that in a remote wilderness spot up the McKenzie River there was a wrecked airplane.

Someone who knew someone who had a friend with a few large trucks to spare borrowed two for a weekend. Someone else borrowed a string of pack-horses. Then on a Saturday morning, Smith and a platoon of NYA boys hiked into the woods to the site of the wreckage, salvaged what they could (apparently a lot, the plane was in surprisingly good shape) packed it back to the trucks and on into Eugene, then rebuilt the aircraft from the ground up. Proceeds from the sale of the plane financed the department for a year.

The additional staff members, although they were needed to meet the promises made to the city in 1938, were putting a strain on the school's budget. But again Adams came to the rescue. On Sept. 11, he reported to the Board that \$20,000—an increase of more than \$2,000—would be available for teacher salaries for the coming year.

Everyone heaved a sigh of relief. School year 1939-40 began without a hitch.

There was none of the uncertainty that had accompanied the opening of school a year before. Students and staff members alike were self-assured, business-like, and professional.

Art Clough is a good example. New students in Clough's creative design classes were met by two requirements that Clough insisted on before going any further in the class.

"First, they had to build a pleasant shape," he said. "It had to be pleasant to look at from all angles.

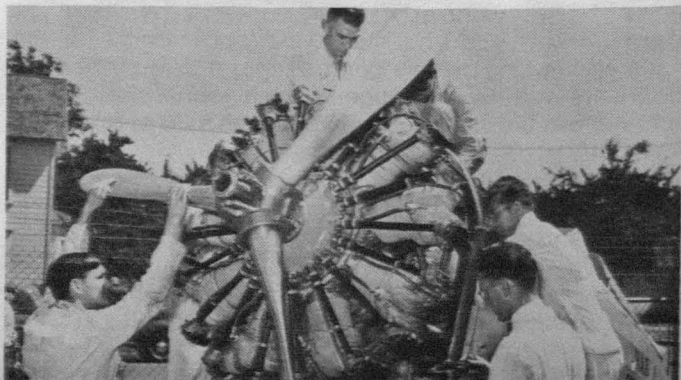
"Then they had to make a plaster mold of what they had made, and after that, they had to reverse the process. What that did was teach them the fundamentals of proportion, use of space, and positives and negatives.

"The second thing they had to do was guess a perpendicular using a yardstick hanging on the wall. The human eye is very accurate, and I wanted to show them how accurate it was. Most of them usually came within 1/32 of an inch of being perfect."

The practicality of that particular exercise—the beauty of Clough's art classes was that he was always practical—was demonstrated dramatically a few years later when the war had a full head of steam and many of Clough's students were working for Boeing in Seattle.

One of them, a graduate of Clough's plaster class, was on the fuselage assembly line along with several other former EVS students. Their job was a crucial one. Briefly, they were to plaster the panels of each bomber and fighter that came down the line. The plaster was quick-drying and—among other things—would be used to

General Aviation Mechanics boys working on aircraft engine at the Eugene Vocational School.



help detect flaws in the aircraft, flaws that could prove dangerous or even fatal to the plane's crew.

Because the plaster was fast-drying, they had to master a technique in which they could cover an entire panel in one sweep of the hand. Clough's ex-student was sweeping panels, hundreds of them an hour, when suddenly he stopped and looked at the part he'd just finished.

"Something's wrong here," he said.

"Looks all right to me," one of his friends said.

"No, something's really wrong. I can feel it."

"Sure there is, and my name's Eisenhower," said another.

Still convinced that something wasn't right, he walked off the line—something that was unheard of and could possibly get him fired—and went to get a supervisor. He persuaded the supervisor that something was indeed not right. The line was shut down until a team of engineers could get there. When they did, they tested the panel with their most sophisticated instruments and one of them looked up in amazement and said,

"This man has detected an error amounting to 1,000th of an inch."

During the war Boeing lusted for EVS graduates. They were good, unbelievably good, and they made a name for a little one-horse school at the bottom of Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Students in Mabel Phelps' homemaking class.



But war production was still a few months off in the fall of 1939, and the Eugene Vocational School was having the time of its life. Because what they were doing had never been done before, they made things up as they went along.

Grace Eldredge took a look at her dressmaking department and decided—because of her Bloomingdale's background—that she knew more about dress design than dressmaking and promptly started turning out fashion designers.

Dot Dotson's photography department was busy. Grant Orme, a newcomer from Pittsburg, California, was the backbone of the welding program.

Orme, who later bulled through World War II like it wasn't even there, was a fiery rugged man who felt that if you don't work hard, you didn't work. He was a master at his trade and an excellent teacher. And in his classroom, he was The Boss.

Mrs. Van Loan and Orme both realized that some sort of examination system would have to be added to the welding program, so Mrs. Van Loan turned to the University of Oregon for help. That was her first mistake. Her second mistake was when she tried again.

In defense of the University, it wasn't entirely at fault. Universities, especially in those days, were not accustomed to drawing up competence exams for welding programs. Vocational education still had, if not a bad name, at least a Second Class Citizen name throughout much of the college community.

But they were game. One morning, the first exam writer showed up in Orme's class and began circulating among the students. Although what exactly happened was not recorded, the results were.

"I was sitting in my office," said Mrs. Van Loan, "when Grant stormed in. He was furious. 'Get that man the hell out of my shop', he shouted.

"It turns out that the man from the University was talking down to his students, like they were nobodies."

That was bad. It was worse though when it happened again. Orme was at the end of his rope and the University was running out of people.

They tried one more time, this time with a petite woman named Leona Tyler. Leona was a natural.

She also circulated through the classroom but her approach was different.

"Why do you wear clothes like this?" she said, "What are those goggles for? What does this machine do?"



Off-Reservation people taking Aircraft Welding work at the Eugene Vocational School.

That one over there? How many different ways of welding are there?"

The effect was predictable. Leona charmed the socks off Orme and his students. And her finale won them over for good.

"How do you do all this? Can I try?"

Orme was delighted.

"Sure, there's nothing to it." Orme was ready to carve her initials into a tree.

Leona wasn't the best welder there ever was, but for a few moments that afternoon at the Eugene Vocational School, she was the only one. Naturally, the testing program went ahead as scheduled.

Meanwhile, in Europe the Second World War was going ahead as scheduled too.

Hitler was making all the moves. Despite a cautious political tack by the United States to stay neutral, and despite urging by the America First'ers, led by Charles Lindberg, for America to mind its own business, the war was reaching the home front.

Orders were pouring in for arms and equipment. Some Americans were signing up in the RAF. Others were fighting against the Japanese in China.

By the end of May, 1940 the writing was on the wall. If we weren't actually going to get into a shooting war soon (which knowledgeable observers believed without question), then at least we were going to be on the side of the good guys.

On May 10, Hitler invaded the Low Countries. The war was on. Just three weeks later, on May 28, Roosevelt appointed a National Defense Advisory Committee.



Changing shifts at the Eugene Vocational School of Off-Reservation Training. Civilian training for the Army Air Corps. Note uniform boys wear—white coveralls, black ties. Girls wear white shirts and blue coveralls and white caps. The white caps cover the hair entirely while the girls are on the job.

America, he ordered, would be ready whether it fought or watched.

National Defense—the biggest and the most dramatic operation in the country's history—was scheduled to begin in the middle of July, less than two months away.

But in Eugene, a curious thing happened. Either because of the magic that touched the Eugene Vocational School, or because of the unusual organization of its administrators, teachers and students, or because of a combination of the two, EVS was far ahead of the rest of the nation.

On June 10, only 13 days after the president ordered the formation of the National Defense Advisory Committee, and a full month ahead of the rest of the nation, the Eugene Vocational School began a National Defense program in aviation sheet metal with 200 students. At that time, there were 416 students and 30 teachers in the school.

Four hundred-forty six people and maybe a dozen of them knew what a war was.

The rest of them were about to find out.

Chapter 5

During the summer of 1940, the Eugene Vocational School sandbagged for war. On August 1, Cramer appealed to the Board for an eight-foot fence around the aviation mechanics area to prevent "theft and sabotage". The request was referred to committee.

Staff members pulled together, including M. C. Buchanan, Art Clough, B. D. Dotson, Grace Eldredge, H. H. Harris, Roger Hougum, W. O. Harvey, Martin Johnson, Catherine Lamb, H. C. MacFarlane, Eldon Ripple, Clarence W. Sinniger, Harold Shogren, Lillian Van Loan, Frances Peterson, Ralph Clark, George Myrmo, John Quiner, Esther Greer, A. L. Hepner, Charles Winslow, and a newcomer named Mel Gaskill.

By August, the tone of the next five years was set. France had fallen more than a month before, on June 22. On July 15 more than 30,000 students nation-wide had signed up for National Defense Training. And by August

Off Reservation Training engine class.



31, that number had jumped to 92,000. In eleven days, it would jump again, to 107,000, and at the end of the year, 325,000.

When students returned to school in September, they were met by an already active war program, described by Cramer as being "very effective in training men for the aviation industry, shipyards and other essential trades," and determination by the District to "provide a 1940 model of education for 1940 conditions."

1940 conditions were indeed unusual. Throughout District No. 4, students were taught crash programs in citizenship, social studies, and love of country. There were activities like the Americanization Oratorical Contest and the Children's Crusade for Children in which \$88.80 in pennies were contributed by Eugene's students to help needy children in Germany, Poland, Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France.

Even teachers got into the act. The District went to great lengths to show its voters that Eugene's teachers were patriotic, God-fearing good citizens of the community by pointing out that most of them held church membership, belonged to service and fraternal clubs, contributed \$9,500 annually to charities, and had that most American of American pastimes, a hobby.

Off-Reservation Training student in machine shop.





Off Reservation Training instrument repair class.
Vern Nielsen (standing, left) instructor. 1942.

Everyone was being affected. Attrition was hitting the school staff as more and more teachers were called to active duty. Even high school boys were pulled into the National Guard. Then on November 11, the Eugene Vocational School's best friend, Lieutenant Commander O. D. Adams, was summoned to the Bremerton Navy Yard.

It became difficult to keep up with all that was happening at EVS. Boeing was already snatching up every Eugene Vocational School graduate it could get and wrote in February asking for more. In April, Hardy Steeholm, a consultant to the Office of Education for National Defense visited the school, then went back to Washington to spread the word: EVS was teaching national defense better than anyone else. Jack Lamb once said that the vocational school was better-known to the nation's capitol than it was to the citizens of Eugene. That was stretching it a bit, but nevertheless, the school was an instant hit with the war production bureaucracy.

In fact, the school's stature with the federal government resulted in a \$39,000 federal grant—\$10,000 more than its entire operating budget in 1939—for national defense training in 1941.

The federal money was put to good use. In addition to the 200 aviation sheet metal students, 60 more were added to the aviation mechanics course, all working 24 hours a day. Everyone seemed to be touched by war



Woman taking training for Boeing Aircraft Company. Note dresses worn by these trainees. It is their first day on the job. When they report back in the morning there is no doubt that they will be in proper uniform.

production. Automotive operated 12 hours a day. Electric and acetylene welding was too—supplying men for Portland's shipyards. In the machine shop, students worked 18 hours a day learning how to be shapers, drill press and lathe operators. Blueprint reading had gone to an around-the-clock schedule. The only National Defense gunsmithing course in the state began. Radio students were working 16 hours a day. Even a special WPA project called Training for Older Men started for 100 retired and semi-retired men. The idea was to draw from their work experience and apply it to the war effort.

In the first year, the National Defense program had grown to 500 students. Peak enrollment prior to war production had been 972 but it doubled in one year to 1,819. Nationally, vocational and engineering schools had increased their enrollment from two to three million students, and schools in 300 cities across the country had gone to a 24 hour-a-day operation.

The war was getting closer. Cramer, who had seen \$150,000 in government money funnel into his district, sent out another message to Eugene: "The unsettled world condition has made Americans stop and take stock of our own affairs. The preservation of American democracy as a way of life is a cause which is very dear to us all. The public school system is the first line of defense in this battle. Your schools are staffed by honest, sincere, patriotic teachers; the younger generation of Americans

are as fine a group as this country has ever seen. Your schools have done their part in developing American unity and patriotism."

Unity was a special product of the vocational school, involving both the students and staff. When Mrs. Van Loan was named director May 26, new shops were needed for woodworking and aviation. She sent memos to the NYA camp and to staff members telling them "you will report to such and such a location tomorrow at 7 p.m. to build work benches," or "you should be at the new construction site tomorrow night to pour foundations," or "please take three students to town today and pick up the following materials. Bouncer will be available."

(Bouncer was Mrs. Van Loan's Model A Ford that served as delivery van, staff car and errand-runner for the vocational school for many years. Everyone drove Bouncer, and no one remembers ever getting behind the wheel when the gas tank wasn't full. Bouncer is still alive and well in Corvallis, owned by an Oregon State University student.)

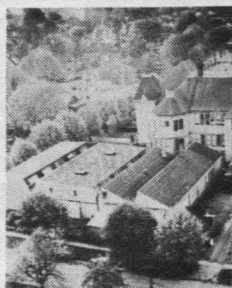
The National Defense boom put a strain on the vocational school's physical plant, both at Fourth and Madison and at the Airpark. Students at the Geary Building were running out of room almost before the program began. And at the Airpark, the facilities were dismal—the old hangars were falling apart; walls and roofs were rickety and full of holes, the asphalt runway was actually leaking (the landfill used to cover up the old swamp never did work, with the result that in some places, the

Off Reservation Training propeller class.
Rodney Jeans (kneeling), instructor. 1942



pressure of a human foot could cause water to seep through the pavement), and it was a fire trap.

Mrs. Van Loan looked at her priorities and went to work. On October 13, 1941, with more than \$65,000 in federally-purchased equipment due anytime, she appeared before the Board to appeal for \$2,000 in construction funds. More space was needed she said. There would have to be room for an expanded electric welding program, plus a third shop building and a temporary metal storage and work area. NYA students would do the work.



Geary surrounded by
NYA-built shops.

Work had barely begun, however, when conditions overseas went from bad to worse. Europe was at total war and the Japanese fleet was sailing around the Pacific like it owned it. U.S. involvement was inevitable, only being a matter of time before something bad enough happened to force it into the fight.

The "something bad enough" happened over breakfast on December 7 in the territory of Hawaii. After Pearl Harbor, there was no question about it. The war was real, and it was here.

At its December 8 meeting, the Board calmly took note of the events of the day before and announced that "inasmuch as war was declared this date by the United States against Japan, the danger of sabotage immediately becomes serious."

Gilbert MacLaren then moved that a fence earmarked for Wilson Junior High School be erected instead around the vocational school. The Board agreed. And then MacLaren, who didn't become a successful businessman by giving things away, moved that the Board bill the federal government for a new fence for Wilson Junior High. That motion passed too.

The next four years are a blur.