

An excerpt from the:

# History of Oregon Newspapers/Columbia County

[History of Oregon Newspapers](#) by [George Stanley Turnbull](#)

Columbia County

Rainier.—So far as available records indicate, the *Rainier Review*, Rainier's present newspaper, was the first launched in the town. Volume 1, No. 1 came off the press Friday, February 8, 1895. The publisher was W. H. Imus, who years later retired from journalism, became a prominent lawyer and business man of Kalama, Cowlitz county, Washington—and forgot all about the *Review*.

The first number was a five-column, eight-page edition, half of it printed at home, the other half the work of the American Typefounders ready-print plant in Portland. Subscription was \$1.50 a year.

The *Review*, (Mr. Imus said in a brief salutatory) is here for the benefit of Rainier, Columbia county—and W. H. Imus, Esq. We believe that a correct portrayal of Rainier's advantages as a business and manufacturing point will result in a marked development of this town . . . . Come in and let's shake hands. Respectfully, W. H. Imus.

Material ordinarily contained in a salutatory was reserved for a longer editorial in the next column, running, as did all the other editorials, without headings.

The *Review* (he said) has no apology to make for its existence. It hasn't come to fill any "long-felt want," nor for the philanthropic purpose of enlightening the people of this city and county. The publication of this Great Family Necessity was undertaken principally because the publisher thought there was money in it. No other consideration would have induced him to make this investment. But while the *Review* shall be published as a business enterprise, it shall have due regard for the fitness of things, and reject everything scandalous and sensational.

It shall always endeavor to be free to offer just criticism, to uphold the right and condemn the wrong. If there are any schemers who have jobs or schemes of questionable character and wish the assistance of the *Review*, they will have to be *dissappointed* [sic]. We shall participate in no factional fights. Harmony and union of purpose and effort are needed to bring Rainier to the front, and for this object the *Review* proposes to work. A strong pull, and a pull altogether [sic] will bring success and prosperity to us all.

The paper was equipped with a grand and glorious conglomeration of type faces— old styles, moderns, gothics, with which the printer managed to do a surprisingly neat job. Nine columns of

local advertising was carried. Every bit of it reflected the general label character of the advertising of the 90's.

Smith, the cash grocer, uses up six inches double column to urge the reader to "watch this space" and see what he would fill it with the next week.

The only ad of a different type was one by Dean Blanchard, proprietor of the townsite, who, under the heading "Romulus Built Rome," pointed the contrast between his building a wall around it and the Rainier policy of inviting people in to help build up the town.

The description of Rainier which occupied the three non-advertising columns on the first page indicated what was back of the town, which, incorporated in 1887, had obtained its new charter six years later. The town had eight lumber and shingle mills in or near it.

Mr. Imus was one of the state's bright columnists of the period. He had a little column headed "Light and Trashy," some samples of which are here given:

A Tacoma gentleman who had fought many a wordy battle over the name of Mt. "Rainier-Tacoma" got mad and wanted to lick the stuffin' out of us because we would not drop the name "Rainier" in christening this paper.

The Ole Man Imus was down from Kalama the other day and bought a mule for breeding purposes, declaring that he believed there was more money in mules than prunes.

The *Review* carried its local news, all headless, on page 8 — two and a half columns of it. That is, it is all headless except one item, which might be regarded as advertising. Its presence, incidentally, indicates the relative looseness of the lottery law of the time. Under the heading "Prize Drawing at Smith's" is a list of the lucky numbers that had drawn the hanging lamp, sauce dishes, etc., the previous month, with the names of the winners. "The first prize this month will be an eight-day clock," the notice concludes.

Clatskanie news occupied a column and a half.

The paper carried a column and a half of editorial with no apparent political bias in the fourteen items. One of the most significant was one urging the direct election of senators, in place of the old legislative method.

Mr. Imus had just sold the *Kalama Bulletin* to Adams & Smith (134) and wanted to find another location as good as Kalama. . . . There was certainty of a railroad through Rainier to Astoria, with promising industrial sites. There was also some talk of moving the county seat to Rainier, which might have influenced his choice to some extent.

Mr. Imus was in Rainier from February until July 1895, when he was forced to return to Kalama to take back his paper, the purchasers of which had failed to keep up their payments. He left the *Review* in the hands of a succession of printer-publishers, one of whom, a young rustler named Brown from Texas, "supplied the town with printing for six months ahead, worked until 1

o'clock in the morning," Mr. Imus related, "and at the end of the month collected every cent and borrowed every other cent from anybody he could, and went to Portland 'to buy supplies.' He never came back." Successive editors as recalled by old-timers, or indicated in incomplete files (135) are F. B. Brown, C. W. Herman, W. M. Perry, who announced "with reluctance," after election in 1896 that "as a matter of business" the paper would be suspended (136). The paper had fallen off to a four-column eight-page paper, half home-print, with only 60 inches of advertising and a subscription price dropped to \$1. Mr. Imus, however, continued the publication, with W. R. Cobb as editor and manager (137).

In 1898 J. C. Smith was in charge, and W. A. Wood was an other editor of that period.

Now comes an odd part of the story. Nobody seems to know whether the *Review* was in existence between 1898 and 1905, when the present *Review* was launched. When Miss Jerzyk of Rainier saw Mr. Imus in 1926 in his office in Kelso, where he was prosecuting attorney, he could not remember himself what he had done with the paper. "Girl," he said, "that's a long time ago, and I've been thinking about a lot of things since then." Ayer's lists the *Review* as running under direction of W. J. Rice in 1900.

In any event, Rainier was not without a newspaper all those years, for in November 1900 C. W. Herman, having come back to Rainier, launched the Rainier *Gazette* with a plant he had been using to publish the Uniontown (Wash.) *Gazette*. Mr. Herman sold the paper to R. H. Mitchell for \$350. Mr. Mitchell after two or three years (138) moved his plant to the nearby little town of Houlton, where he established (139) the *Columbia Register*.

Another Rainier *Review*, vol. 1, No. 1, was established July 20, 1905, and it has remained through to date. The founder was W. P. Ely, who, like the other Rainier journalistic pioneers, came across the river from Cowlitz county, Washington, where he continued to conduct the *Cowlitz Valley Journal* of Kelso. The new paper's salutatory, signed by W. P. Ely and G. E. Kellogg (Mr. Kellogg probably was the resident editor), said:

We do not come with a brass band nor street parade, nor make any great promises; that is not our style; but we will endeavor in a painstaking manner to publish a live, newsy, up-to-date paper that will merit your liberal patronage. The paper will be four pages in size for the present, but it is the intention to increase to six or eight pages as soon as business will justify it. . .

Display advertising was 50 cents an inch a month, with a double rate for transient matter. Cost accounting systems were not in general use in those days to guide those incurable optimists who expected to conduct a newspaper on rates such as those. A. P. Bettersworth's name was at the masthead as editor for a few issues in 1906. George H. Umbaugh, lately of the *Lincoln County Leader*, was a later editor.

An anti-saloon paper named the *Advance*, printed in the *Houlton Register* office, made its first appearance Saturday, April 14, 1906, Its editor was H. G. Kemp, a Methodist minister, who at the time was editor of the *Register*, and W. F. Ficher, a Rainier attorney, assistant editor. It pledged itself to an open warfare on the saloons. The *Advance* was a four-column paper of eight pages, four of them home-printed. In later years the *Review* itself supported prohibition.

Ayer's records indicate that Mr. Kemp was running the *Register* as a twice-a-week in Rainier in 1906. Within two years the *Review* had the field to itself. This was the last competition faced by the *Review* until 1927, when for a few months a bit of local factional fighting resulted in the publication of the weekly *News* by F. J. Robertson. It suspended the following January. For a time, in 1907, E. H. Flagg, Oregon newspaper veteran, publisher of several news papers, was editor of the *Review*. Walter C. Fry, who like Mr. Kemp, was a Methodist minister, was editor for a time after Mr. Flagg, remaining until March 1911, when he was succeeded by P. G. Garrison. Charles A. Nutt became editor March 14, 1912, and publisher November 7 of the same year.

Up to this time the *Review* had been handset. Mr. Nutt installed a linotype in November 1912 and increased the size of the paper from six to seven columns, some of which, however, was plate matter.

Another Washington newspaper man, A. E. Veatch, a former teacher, farmer, and lawyer, who had lately sold his *Washington Call* at Montesano, took charge of the *Review* in September 1919 and remained through to December 1932, when his health gave way and he sold the paper to Harold Axford of the *Oregon Journal*, Portland, a former employee of the *Bellingham (Wash.) Herald*.

Maurice Nelson was the next publisher, succeeded in 1938 by A. R. McCall from Elgin.

During much of the period of his ownership of the *Review*, Mr. Veatch was assisted by Miss Anna Jerzyk, who took a furlough from the paper long enough to complete her college education, graduating from the University of Oregon school of journalism in 1928. The period of his ownership was marked by development of the mechanical facilities and the construction of a new building to house his plant. While publisher of the *Review*, Mr. Veatch was elected mayor of Rainier. He was recalled for extra-strict enforcement of liquor laws.

There is a difference of belief as to whether the old *Review* was the first newspaper published in Rainier. John A. Johnson, of the nearby community of Hudson, told Miss Jerzyk he thought he remembered an earlier publication than the one started by Mr. Imus. He could not recall the name nor the date.

"It being so long ago," said Mr. Johnson (140) "I had gotten that paper confused with the *Review*. When the paper to which I refer started publication they prefaced their introductory remarks with 'We can't come with a brass band' . . . This paper I think was Rainier's first newspaper. It came on the scene sometime between 1885 and 1892."

W. P. Ely's *Review* (started in 1905) carried almost the identical phrase about the brass band, saying, "We do not come with a brass band nor street parade." Perhaps it may be said, then, that Mr. Johnson's memory of early Rainier newspapers is somewhat like that of Publishers Imus and Mitchell, whose impressions have succumbed to the eroding hand of time. No Rainier paper earlier than 1895, at all events, lasted long enough to get a mention in Ayer's Newspaper Directory.

The *Columbia River Pilot* was put aboard at Rainier by C. W. Semmes and Edward R. Semmes in 1930. It was soon dropped for more profitable undertakings.