

Dedicatory Exercises

VERT MEMORIAL, COMMUNITY BUILDING AND MUSEUM
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND GYMNASIUM

— AT —

Vert Memorial Auditorium

PENDLETON, OREGON

MARCH 12, 1937

*Judge Calvin Sweek, Member of Board of Directors, School District No. 16
Presiding*

INVOCATION

Rev. R. Murray Jones, Pastor First Presbyterian Church

THE LONELY WOOD

LULLABY

THERE'S A LARK IN MY HEART

LULLY

CECIL FORSYTHE

A. WALTER KRAMER

Choral Group, Pendleton Women's Club

INTRODUCTION OF PLATFORM GUESTS by

Mr. Calvin Sweek

Mr. C. L. Lieuallen

Mrs. George Stangier

Mr. Austin Landreth

Chairman

Mayor, City of Pendleton

President Pendleton Women's Club

Superintendent of Pendleton Public Schools

TRIBUTE TO MR. AND MRS. JOHN VERT

*Mrs. A. C. McIntyre, President of Oregon State
Federation of Women's Clubs*

THE WATER WITCH, A Concert Polka

NON E VER

CLAY SMITH

NATTEI

*Trombone solos by Dan K. Tilley, Band Director
Pendleton Public Schools*

*Accompanied by Miss Marjorie Gellatly, Supervisor of Music,
Pendleton Public Schools*

DEDICATORY ADDRESS

*Dr. Bruce Baxter, President of Willamette University,
Salem, Oregon*

BENEDICTION

Rev. R. Murray Jones, Pastor First Presbyterian Church

NOTE: *All are invited to inspect the three buildings at the close of this program. Junior High School students and teachers will serve as guides.*

John and Jessie Vert purchased Major Lee Moorhouse's collection of Indian artifacts shortly before her death. This collection, and the many items of interest the Verts collected from all parts of the world, are displayed in the Vert Museum.

This exhibit has been evaluated by experts as being one of the finest displays of Native American culture in the state of Oregon.

Museum visitors will find two picture exhibits in the halls of the Vert building which reflect the interest of other Pendleton residents and Indians of the area.

Watercolor portraits of Indians, painted by the Rev. Fred Wissenbach, a former rector of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, are displayed in the main lobby. Also included are photographs of Indian life by Major Lee Moorhouse.

The Wissenbach pictures were bought by interested Pendleton citizens who gave them to the building.

East Oregonian
August 26, 1967

THE VERT MEMORIAL COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Vert Memorial Community Building and Museum was a memorial John Vert planned to honor his wife, a pioneer leader in movements for the improvement of the Pendleton community. Jesse Vert was a charming and well-educated woman who took an intense interest in the education of young people and devoted much time to her church and women's club work.

Through the vision and energy of Pendleton's school superintendent, Mr. Austin Landreth, a request for government funds to supplement the Vert money was developed. Because the plan was for the proposed building to be used by both the schools and the community, this aid was combined with city bonds and the whole plant, including the Vert Memorial, the Pendleton Junior High School and Gymnasium, was the final result. Completed in 1937, the entire cost of the complex was \$300,000.

The Vert Memorial Building houses an auditorium, museum, large clubroom, little theatre, kitchen and offices for Boy Scouts of America and Campfire Girls.

According to Mr. Vert's defined management, the Vert complex is operated under the combined jurisdiction of the Vert Council, the City of Pendleton and School District 16-R.

THE VERT MEMORIAL

The Vert Memorial Community Building and Museum was originally planned by John Vert who by a generous bequest in his will made possible the fulfillment of his desire to honor his wife, Jessie S. Vert, a pioneer leader in movements for the betterment of the Pendleton community.

Mr. Vert first came to Pendleton in 1876, and thirteen years later he brought his bride, Jessie S. McLean, to her Pendleton home. Both Mr. and Mrs. Vert were born and reared in Scotland, he in Haddington and she in Karrimuir.

Mrs. Vert was educated on the continent of Europe, having lived in both Germany and France, where she learned to speak both languages fluently. She was an accomplished musician, also, and taught music in Pendleton for many years. Shortly after her arrival she was engaged to teach languages and music in the Pendleton Academy, one of the early, fine private schools supported by the Presbyterian Church.

Those were, indeed, pioneer days for Pendleton. The influence of the Verts was felt not only by the children of the community but socially, too, for the Verts were active leaders. Mrs. Vert was a member of the leading social and study clubs. She was most gracious and kind, had a keen sense of humor and ready wit, and was popular with old and young. Her activities in school, civic, library, and women's club work was an inspiration to all who knew her.

The Verts had no children but showed a very practical interest in the young people by leaving money for scholarships in Haddington, the town where Mr. Vert was born. Scholarships were established, also, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, where he owned extensive wheat lands, and in Pendleton, where most of their lives were spent. The educational funds were to be known as the John and Jessie S. Vert Memorial Educational Fund.

Mr. Vert always encouraged the lodge and club activities of his wife, and it was due to her influence that they decided to leave their fortune to build a clubhouse to be used by the women of Pendleton and to establish a museum.

Mrs. Vert was a member of the Eastern Star, Current Literature Club, Thursday Afternoon Club, the early groups of Pendleton pioneer days. She later belonged to the Woman's Club and was one of the charter members of the Pioneer Club, which she helped to organize. She was an active member of the library board when the Umatilla County library was built.

Mrs. Vert passed away in Portland in 1927. Shortly afterward, Mr. Vert returned to live in Pendleton and to make plans for the future Vert Memorial. He died in 1934, and by his will directed that money be given to the Pioneer Club to help finance the publishing of a book containing the stories of the early pioneer families of Pendleton. This book was published in 1937 and is entitled "Reminiscences of Oregon Pioneers".

His gift of forty-five thousand dollars to the first Presbyterian Church of Pendleton gave it the beautiful edifice which it now occupies. The Verts were charter members of that church. The largest part of his estate, seventy-six thousand dollars, was left for a building to be used for the community good but especially a building which the women could use for their club activities; however, the amount did not seem sufficient to buy a site and equip a building such as Pendleton would need.

Through the vision and energy of Pendleton's city school superintendent, Mr. Austin Landreth, a request for government funds to supplement the Vert money was developed. With this aid and the plan for the proposed building to be used by both the schools and the community, the magnificent plant that Pendleton has today was the final result. There are three buildings in the unit. The Vert Memorial building contains the large public auditorium, the woman's club room, the Vert museum, and the little theater, as well as a kitchen and several small committee rooms. The Junior High School building contains a complete and up-to-date junior high school of twenty eight rooms, a library, home economics laboratories, complete equipment for a manual training department, a teachers' room, and administrative offices. The gymnasium building houses the gymnasium, the cafeteria, and the locker and shower rooms. The entire unit covers two full city blocks of land, beautifully landscaped, and is a credit to the city of Pendleton.

By Mr. Vert's will, he also left quite extensive collections of Indian relics, stuffed birds, geological specimens, articles of pioneer days, as well as other articles gathered during the Vert's extensive world travels. The collections have been properly classified and placed in the museum, which is the only one of its kind in the entire Northwest.

When completed in 1936, the Vert Memorial building was turned over to the city of Pendleton by the trustees of the Vert estate. The city has asked the School District # 16 to maintain the building. The Woman's Club room, the kitchen, the little theater, and the museum are under the management of a special committee composed of a chairman, chosen by Mr. Vert before his death, and a member representing each of the following clubs named by himⁱⁿ the codicil of his will: Current Literature Club, Delphian Club, Pioneer Club, Thursday Afternoon Club, and the Woman's Club. This group is known as the Vert Memorial Committee or Council and provides for the care and upkeep of the club room, kitchen, museum, and little theater.

Aside from the museum, the Vert building houses a display of pictures of notable local Indians painted by the Reverend Fred Wissenbach, formerly of Pendleton. These paintings are hung in the lower main hall of the Memorial building and were donated to the building by interested Pendleton citizens. The paintings are highly praised by expert critics.

The Vert Memorial building is a splendid example of cooperation among civic groups. Community welfare is served to a very high degree in the daily use of the building. As many as thirty-five activities, other than regular junior high school classes, use and enjoy this building every week. Both publicly and privately, it is a center for groups of all ages.

The Verts have well perpetuated their name. Pendleton is, indeed, fortunate and thankful for this splendid gift.