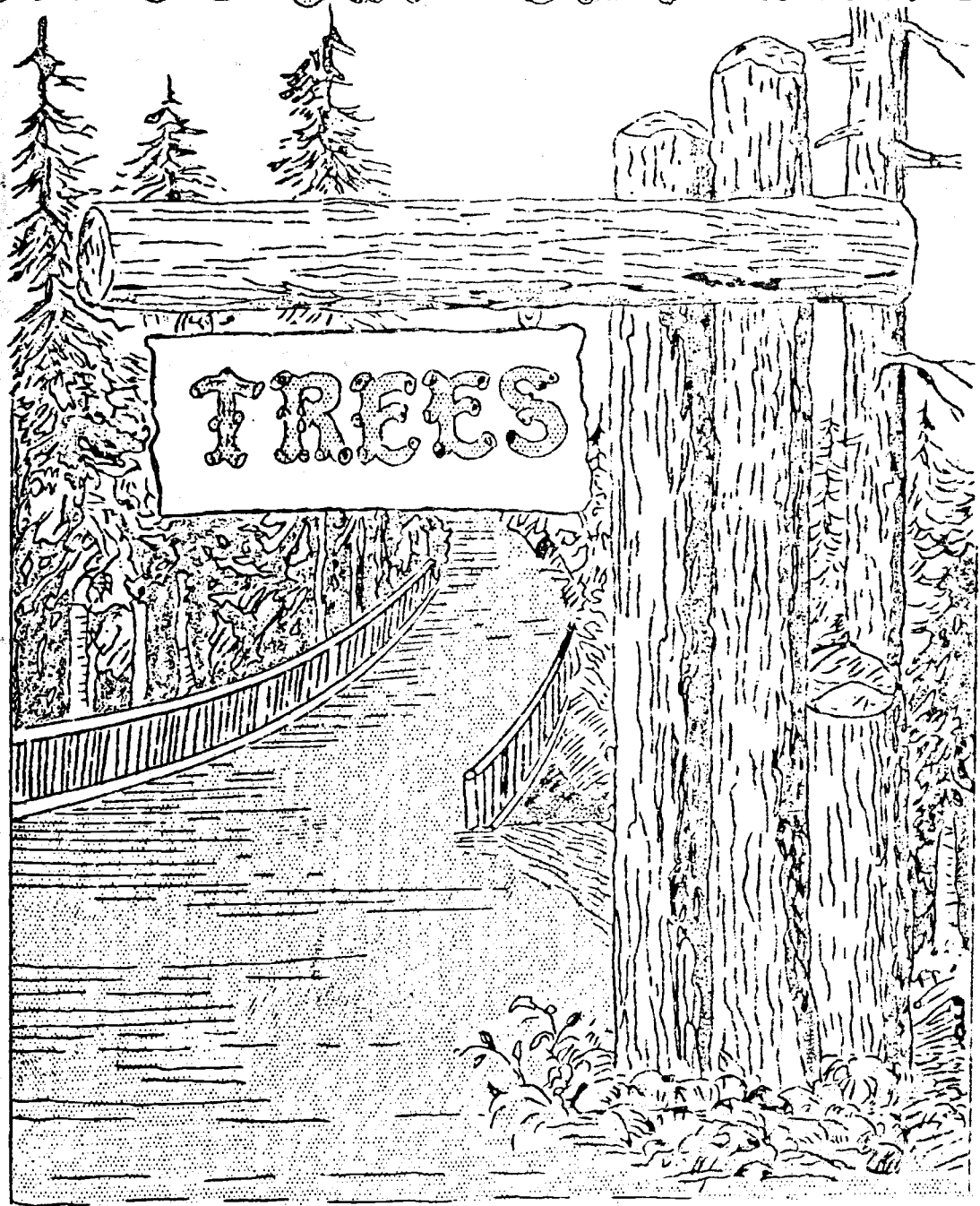


# OREGON ODDITIES



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The Federal Writers' and Historical Records Survey Projects  
of the  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION OF OREGON  
409 Elks Building  
Portland, Oregon

The items in this bulletin, selected from the material compiled by the Federal Writers' Project and the Historical Records Survey of the Works Progress Administration, are representative of the significant collections being made by these nation-wide programs.

The Historical Records Survey is inventorying all sources of early Oregon history, including county and state records; town and church archives; historic cemeteries; old manuscripts and imprints; old printing presses; monuments and relics; private diaries, letters and memoirs; historic buildings; and Indian records and lore.

The chief undertaking of the Federal Writers' Project has been the American Guide Series of books. State guide books have been published for Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Delaware, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Dakota, North Dakota and Vermont. The manuscript for the Oregon Guide is completed and will be ready for release this spring. The Oregon Guide, the first authentic tourist guide of the state, is fully illustrated and will contain several chapters dealing with history, government, industry and commerce, labor, transportation, agriculture and education. Half the Guide will be devoted to tours of major Oregon highways, with points of interest logged mile by mile.

The Oregon Federal Writers' Project has written and distributed the following books:

Flax in Oregon  
Builders of Timberline Lodge  
Fire Prevention in Portland  
History of Portland Fire Alarm System

The Oregon Historical Records Survey has written and distributed the following publications:

The Inventory of the Archives of Morrow County  
Diary of Basil Longworth, Oregon Pioneer  
Transportation Items from the Weekly Oregonian  
Married Women's Separate Property Rights  
Letter from Luckiamute Valley, 1846  
Daily Sales of an Auburn Store, 1868  
Abstract of a Pioneer Road, 1864-1911  
From Corvallis to Crescent City, 1874  
County Histories, University of Oregon, The  
Commonwealth Review

## TREES -- OREGANA

And the shadows of the ages are drifted  
In the banners the forest unfurl,  
Sam Simpson.

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The trees of Oregon have been used not only in the construction of great edifices and in the building of ships, but in counsels of war, in treaties, in judicial proceedings, in courtships, in death; they even have been used as safety deposit vaults. Romance attaches to the ornamental and orchard trees, brought to Oregon by the saga-making pioneers in covered-wagon days. Science has been interested in Oregon's age-old trees, prehistoric giants, submerged beneath the waters of lakes and rivers; the fossilized trees of primordial forests.

### DAVID DOUGLAS

Ranking first among native trees, because of its beauty, abundance and economic value, is the Douglas fir. According to some authorities, who claim the Douglas is not of the fir family, but a distinct species in itself, this tree should be designated simply by the name of Douglas. This is the name of the brave young scientist, David Douglas, who discovered it in 1824, and who later met a tragic death in the Hawaiian Islands. In his journals Douglas describes the tree: "Pinus sp; exceeds all trees in magnitude: I measured one lying on the shore of the river 39 feet in circumference and 159 feet in length; the top was wanting but at the extreme length  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, so I judge it would be in all about 190 feet high if not more, girth 48 feet; they grow very straight; the wood is softer than most Pinus except *P. conadonis*, and is easily split. This species, although I have not yet seen the cones, I take to be *P. taxifolia*. The most common tree in the forest."

On the Klaskanine River, in Clatsop County, a giant spruce tree, known as the "Jack McCawley" tree, in honor of a veteran woodsman of the community, rose to a height of 240 feet, measured 11 feet, 9 inches in diameter well off the ground. Ten hours were required to fell

the tree. For more than 125 feet upward no limbs branched from the trunk, which was straight as an arrow and almost perfectly round, with no flare nor spread at the base. When milled the tree is said to have contained 54,000 feet of lumber.

The *pinus flesilia*, a dwarf pine, found only in the Wallowa Mountains, grows at an elevation of from 6000 to 8000 feet. Apropos of this, the Wallowa Mountains have recently been declared by scientists as a part of the Rocky Mountains, having, throughout, the same flora and fauna.

The Lodgepole pine, growing all the way from Alaska to Mexico, is said to change in appearance according to environment. A piece of partially burned lodgepole pine, showing knifemarks, has been found imbedded in ice in Charcoal Cave, 12 miles southeast of Bend. It has been identified by "dendrochronology"--the art of reading time from tree rings--as part of a green tree growing in that section sometime between 1330 and 1370.

The only cypresses found in the Northwest are the Port Orford cedar of Coos and Curry Counties, and the McNab cypress, found in Josephine County and northern California.

### SEQUOIAS

According to the scientists, the sequoias, in ages past, were the most widely distributed of all trees. Fossilized specimens of the tree have been found in every part of the world. Today the *sequoia sempervirens* is found only on the Pacific Coast, in the fog belt from southern Oregon southward.

No evidence has yet been discovered of a sequoia tree dying from old age, from insect attack or from disease. Giant sequoias grow only from seeds. The tree is said to have derived its name in commemoration of a talented Cherokee Indian,

named Sequoia, who originated an alphabet for his tribal language.

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ONE TREE -- ONE PARK

On Summer Street, in Salem, there stands a stately sequoia, more than four feet in diameter and over a hundred feet tall, that marks one of the smallest parks in the United States. The area of the park is ten by fifteen feet. It was created to protect a tree, which was planted by Daniel Waldo before Salem streets were laid out, more than sixty years ago. When the townsite was surveyed, Waldo refused to vacate the property unless the sequoia could be preserved. With the advent of the automobile, the tree was declared a menace to traffic. But a red signal light was installed upon the tree, and it was again saved.

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When gold was discovered in California in 1849, almost every able-bodied man struck out for the mining regions, among them John R. Porter, a lover of trees. Though he fared none too well in the gold fields, and brought back little of the yellow metal, he did bring back to his home community a more enduring treasure, in the form of two bushel-bags of cones from the California redwoods, whose symmetrical beauty he had admired.

He planted the seed in a nursery and grew about a hundred seedlings, some of which he divided among his neighbors. He planted most of them, however, on his farm near Verboort. There are now about a hundred redwood trees in Washington County, which had their start in Porter's nursery. Most of them are about 100 feet tall, cone-shaped and symmetrical as a top. Three of the trees are on the Pacific University campus; others on the courthouse grounds at Hillsboro, while all others are located in various parts of Forest Grove.

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Two of Oregon's redwood trees were planted in 1927, one at the east and one at the west gate, of the executive mansion at the National Capital. This was done upon the specific request of Mrs. Coolidge. That the trees served as projects in the political world may be inferred from Mrs. Coolidge's assertion that "they would have the best of attention up to March 4, 1929."

OAK TREES

Of the seventeen different varieties of oak trees, said to be indigenous to the Pacific Coast, only three are native to Oregon, the quercus garryana, or Oregon white oak; the quercus Kelloggi, or California black oak; and the lithocapus densiflora, or tan oak. Of the three, the first named is the only one that grows north of Eugene.

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Near Newberg, in Yamhill County, a great oak marks the grave of the picturesque pioneer, Ewing Young, who died in 1841. The tree, so the story goes, was planted on a bright May day, in 1846, when Sidney Smith (in whose arms Young died) strolled with his sweetheart down the trail to Young's burial place. While there the girl picked up an acorn, which she and Smith planted on the grave as a memorial. In commemoration of Ewing Young, a bronze tablet has been placed on the tree trunk by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

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COUNCIL OAKS

On the Denton Place in Wasco County stands an immense oak tree under which General Joel Palmer, in October 1854, held council and made treaty with the Wasco and other Indian tribes destined for settlement on the Warm Springs Reservation. It is alleged that a copy of this treaty, which has never been violated by the Wascos, was hidden in the trunk of the tree.

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Another "Council" and "safety deposit" tree story is that of the oak on the Mill Creek ranch home of J. C. Neillson, in Wasco County. A bottle, containing the "Treaty of the Tribes of the Mid-Columbia", is supposed to have been hidden in a slight hollow (since grown over) at the forks of the tree, immediately after the treaty was signed, on July 25, 1855. One hundred and forty representatives from the Wascos, the Lower Deschutes and the Dog River tribes are said to have been present at this council meeting, over which the Indian, Billy Chinook, presided.

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A giant maple in Gladstone, Clackamas County, is yet another tree under which the Indians held their tribal pow-wows. The tree stands between McLaughlin Boulevard and Park Place, on the River Road.

## FRUIT TREES

ancient and gnarled, it is probably one of the few remaining trees marking the site of Indian ceremonials and seasonal activities. Three well-known chiefs, said to have been active participants in these events were Clackamas George, Wascheno and Clackamas Jake.

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In 1870, when trees were few along the streets of The Dalles, or Dalles City as the town was then called, the city council ordained that whoever planted a shade tree along the street borders of his property would receive a credit of 50 cents, doubtless to be applied on his taxes or other city assessments. Thus today's beautifully shaded streets of the Dalles are indices of the birth places of the original property owners. New Englanders planted elms. Those from Missouri and the Ohio Valley favored pecanores and black locust.

The locust trees of The Dalles have aroused comment from botanical authorities. A botanist of the United States Department of Agriculture, who examined these trees a few years ago, pronounced them the finest specimens of the species he had ever seen, and much larger than those found where they are native.

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Firs in Summer

Firs in summer bear their winter with them.

Coolly their needles hold  
The frigid splendor and the icy gem,  
Immaculate, manifold.

Theirs is the night of pearl and  
stalactite,

Closed in the green cocoon.  
Listen, it is the moody voice of night  
Under the wintery moon.

It is the wind-song of the whispering  
snow,  
In star worlds that they hear;  
cosmic music trees of winter know--  
never in summer's sphere.

Earth with its vapory tongues of summer  
speaks;

Still do firs keep their moan.  
Ever the cold year nurtures in their  
cheeks,

their roots in the planet stone.  
Howard McKinley Corning.

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In the Lewelling wagon train of 1852, both men and beasts might be thirsty, yet night and morning the two Lewelling wagons of little trees were watered most carefully. For six weary months the trees waved their green banners across the dusty plains and up and down tortuous mountain passes until, at last, they reached their journey's end near where the town of Milwaukie now stands. Here they were carefully planted by their far-sighted owners, Henderson and Seth Lewelling. Three hundred and fifty trees were said to have survived and matured out of the original seven hundred nurslings. From this stock comes much of Oregon's fine fruit trees, especially her cherries.

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Believed to have been the first apple tree planted in Oregon is the seedling planted by Gustavus Hines in 1843, in the yard of the Methodist parsonage at Oregon City. Eleven years later the tree is said to have yielded some twelve bushels of apples, all of which sold for \$9.00 per bushel.

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On Laurel Hill, where the Old Barlow Trail crosses the Cascades, stands an ancient and solitary apple tree, a lonely alien in its forest surroundings. The tree is supposed to have grown from a seed dropped by some member of an immigrant train, perhaps by one returning to his waiting hungry family with provisions from the Foster place, where fruit and vegetables first greeted the weary travelers on their arrival in the Willamette Valley.

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Oregon's famous Bing cherry, developed by Seth Lewelling of Milwaukie, was named in honor of his Chinese servant, Bing, a stalwart Manchu from northern China. When the new cherry matured the question of a name was discussed. Bing had worked on the row where the new cherry was growing. "That was Bing's row," said Lewelling, "Bing's a big man, and the cherry is big, so Bing shall be its name." After thirty years' service in the Lewelling nursery Bing returned to China to visit his family, and while there the Oriental exclusion act went into effect, preventing him from returning to America.

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SUBMERGED FORESTS

Much has been written of the submerged forests in the Columbia River, and what is known as the Bridge of the Gods. Fremont, writing of his explorations as early as 1843, gives a graphic description of the phenomenon. He says: "In many places occur along the river, stumps, or rather portions of the trunks of pine trees, are standing along the shore, and in the water, where they can be seen at a considerable depth beneath the surface, in the beautiful clear water. These collections of dead trees are called on the Columbia the submerged forests, and are supposed to have been created by the effects of some convulsion which formed the Cascades, and which, by damming up the river, placed these trees under the water and destroyed them. But I venture to presume that the Cascades are older than the trees: and as these submerged forests occur at five or six places along the river, I had an opportunity to satisfy myself that they had been formed by immense landslides from the mountains, which here closely shut in the river; and which brought down with them into the river the pines of the mountains. At one place, on the right bank, I remarked a place where a portion of one of these slides seemed to have halted itself, with all the evergreen foliage and vegetation of the neighboring hills, directly amidst the falling and yellow leaves of the river trees..... Following the course of a slide, which was very plainly marked along the mountain, I found that in the interior parts the trees were in their usual erect position; but at the extremity of the slide they were rocked about and thrown into a confusion of inclinations."

PETRIFIED TREES

Petrified trees are numerous throughout Oregon, being found in the Columbia River Gorge, along the John Day, Deschutes and the Ochoco rivers. The fossil remains of a ginkgo, popular as a temple tree in northern China, have been found near Tanner Creek, which empties into the Columbia Gorge. Within a few miles of the town of Prineville, is a petrified forest of giant sequoia trees, according to some scientists, were thrown by a cataclysm of nature in remote ages.

The more than two hundred trees that ornament Oregon's state capitol grounds are said to represent fully thirty families of the botanical world, including rare varieties from every section of the globe.

When the White House at Washington, D. C., was renovated and modernized in 1934, fully 8,000 lineal feet of Oregon's Ponderosa pine was utilized as window sills and door jambs.

RIDING WHIP TREE

Near Silverton a cottonwood, known as the Riding Whip Tree, marks the grave of Mrs. Timothy Davenport, the mother of Homer Davenport, Oregon's famous cartoonist. The tree grew from a branch of a cottonwood used by Mrs. Davenport as a riding whip in 1853 and then planted by her. On July 12, 1936, the tree was dedicated by a marker.

Two living monuments of a wild past still remain at Sparta, a one-time gold boom town. One is the "Lynching Pine" which was the jumping off place for many a hapless Chinese miner. The other, called the "Arrow" tree, was used as a landmark for locating a small settlement on Town Gulch. The miners had trimmed the tree, and today its perfect arrow-shaped outline is clear against the horizon, regardless of the direction from which it may be viewed.

The Oregon myrtle belongs to a species of tree said to be found nowhere else in the world except Palestine. From its beautifully grained wood many attractive utensils and bits of furniture are manufactured.

The Sentinel Snag

A black reminder of death that came  
Swiftly, in searing waves of flame  
To proud wild acres of yellow fir;  
Hushing forever the rhythmic whir  
Of startled grouse as they take the air;  
Leaving a forest charred and bare,  
It stands alone in its clumsy grace  
To mark this barren burial place.

By George M. Shaylor  
CCC Co. 943, Oakridge, Oregon

Bibliography: The Forest Log; The Oregon Historical Quarterly; David Douglas' Journals; Fremont's Journals; pioneer interviews