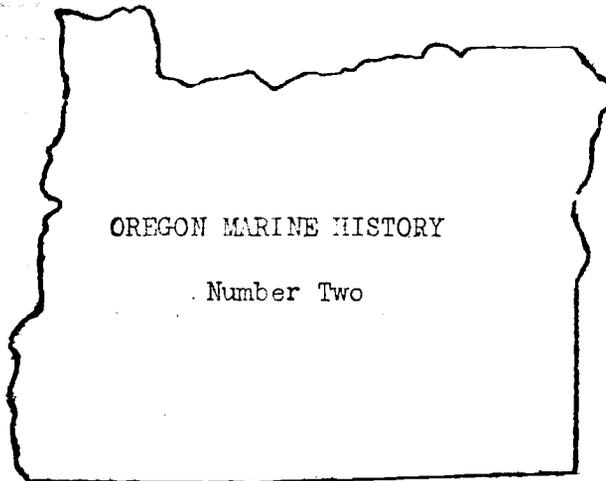


OREGON ODDITIES
AND
ITEMS OF INTEREST



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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION OF OREGON
409 Elks Building
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The items in this bulletin, selected from the material compiled by the 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 Oregon Federal Writers' Project has already written and distributed the following books and pamphlets: Flax in Oregon, Builders of Timberline Lodge, Fire Prevention in Portland, History of Portland Fire Alarm System, and Oregon Oddities, a semi-monthly bulletin.

The manuscript for the Oregon Guide will be published this spring, under sponsorship of the State of Oregon. Tax-supported or non-profit bodies, such as teacher groups, parent-teacher associations, chambers of commerce, county courts, or similar organizations are eligible to become sponsors of Federal Writers' Project publications. Although sponsors have not yet signed for them, the following manuscripts are being prepared by the project for future publication: A Guide to Mount Hood; Old Towns of Oregon; Oregon Forts and Battlefields; Willamette Valley Ghost Towns; Oregon Encyclopedia; Oregon Almanac; Dramas based on Oregon history, suitable for use by secondary schools.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Oregon Oddities Radio Series

Beginning early in February this radio series will be broadcast from transcribed programs over the following stations:

KAST	Astoria	KOOS	Marshfield
KWLK	Kelso (Longview)	KRNR	Roseburg
KSLM	Salem	KFJI	Klamath Falls
KORE	Eugene	KMED	Medford
KLBM	La Grande	KBND	Bend

Also, over at least one Portland station

Although this series bears the same title as the semi-monthly bulletin, it is not except in rare cases, a dramatization of the bulletin material. Listen for announcements concerning the first of Oregon Oddities radio programs. Following are a few of the subjects to be dramatized:

- The Santa Maria of Hobsonville--the fate of the town of Hobsonville hung upon a ship's captain's successfully crossing the Tillamook bar.
- Sailor's Diggins--sailors, who deserted their ship during the southern Oregon gold rush, lost themselves but found gold where they least expected it.
- The Umatilla House--tells the story of a hotel, with a philosophy of kindness that paid dividends in an unexpected crisis.
- Laughing Devil Canyon--the story of two prospectors who back in the 1850's decided to hunt for gold in the wilds of Curry County.
- Madame Dorion--the story of one of the most courageous mothers in Oregon history.
- Star of Oregon--six amateur seamen who sailed to San Francisco in a home-made ship.
- Captain Robert Gray--tells of the discovery of the Columbia river.
- The Lost Blue Bucket Mine--the story of the discovery of one of the most famous lost mines in the world.
- The Barlow Trail--the story of the first party who crossed the Cascade mountains.
- The Aurora Colony--the story of Oregon's communal organization that flourished in pioneer times.

Watch for announcements in your local paper.

Direct trade between China and Willamette River ports began in 1851. In that year the brig Amazon arrived at Portland from Whampoa, China, with a cargo of tea, coffee, sugar, syrup and other articles assigned to Morris & Company. The same year the schooner John Alleyne brought a cargo to Allen McKinley of Oregon City. Regular foreign trade, however was not established until several years later, exports from the Valley generally going only as far as San Francisco.

Lot Whitcomb, founder of the town Milwaukie, owned the first steamer built on the Willamette River. The vessel was launched, and christened after her owner, Christmas Day, 1850. Two days of festivities, in which the entire community took part, followed the launching. The Whitcomb began her regular run March,

The vessel made the run from Milwaukie to Astoria without stopping at Portland. She made a pleasure trip to the Cascades May 30, 1850, returning the next day. The passage was \$25 a couple. This was the first big excursion from the pioneer towns Oregon City, Milwaukie and Portland. Stephen Coffin placed the steamer Goldhunter on the Portland to San Francisco run because the Lot Whitcomb did not stop at Portland. The Goldhunter carried several cargoes of Oregon products to San Francisco which gave Portland such a boom that the Lot Whitcomb was forced to recognize its existence.

The gold discovery in California created a profitable market for Oregon's ships as well as for her other products. In the year of 1853, the Lot Whitcomb was sold to the California Steam Navigation Company for \$50,000, just \$42,000 more than it cost to build her.

Steamboating on the upper Willamette extended considerably when the steamer James Clinton arrived at Eugene on March 1856, having been three days on the run from Corvallis. Time, however, was important. The trip would have been three weeks had it taken three weeks instead of three days because her Captain had agreed to change from the Yamhill river route to the upper Willamette provided the citizens of Eugene and Harrisburg would buy \$5,000 worth of stock in the steamer. To this they agreed.

Indirectly, this first trip of the James Clinton to Eugene was of great importance to the Willamette valley. It resulted in the ultimate organization of the People's Transportation Company. Previously the merchants of Eugene and Harrisburg had been unable to induce steamers to come further south than New Orleans (a point near the present Corvallis). This made it necessary to haul goods by ox-team over rough trails to the upper Willamette towns. Since each stockholder did considerable shipping on his own account, the James Clinton enjoyed a good business on the upper Willamette route. Later, as business increased, other steamers were added to the line.

Steamboating on the middle Columbia was made hazardous for a few weeks in the summer of 1856 by hostile Indians. Swarms of militant red men gathered along the banks of the river and fired at passing steamers. The steamer Mary narrowly escaped being captured by the Indians.

The Carrie Ladd, named in honor of the Portland banker's daughter, was one of the finest stern-wheelers on the Willamette and Columbia rivers. She was launched at Oregon City in 1858. On her trial trip, February 9, 1859, she made the run to Vancouver in twenty-five minutes; to the Cascades in five hours and forty-five minutes; and back to Portland in four hours and thirty-eight minutes.

About 1860 a Corvallis man, deciding that steam boats were too expensive to operate, designed and built a craft equipped with tread-mill machinery, using oxen as motive power. On the trial trip the boat was "walked" ashore at McCooglins Slough where she remained until the oxen had eaten most of the cargo of hay. Finally the strange craft was pulled back into the river by the Steamer Onward and she paddled on down to Canemah. However, the "machinery" did not provide sufficient power to propel the boat back up the river. The owner sold the oxen and the scow went over the falls. As far as is known this method of competing with the steamboat has never been duplicated elsewhere.

The Oregon Steam Navigation Company was incorporated in 1860. The corporation, which grew in influence and wealth until

owners became powers in financial centers of Europe and America, had absolute control of all transportation to and from every point beyond the Cascades. Owning the portages and all the steamboats the company found it unnecessary to consult anyone as to what prices they should charge. Enormous were the rates for freight and passage that, it is reported, the steamer Morgan paid her entire cost of construction on her first trip.

The price of freight from Portland to The Dalles was \$40 per ton; from The Dalles to Celilo, 15 miles, \$15 a ton; from The Dalles to Wallula, \$55 a ton; and from Portland to Lewiston, \$120 per ton. All freight, excepting solids, such as lead, iron, etc., was estimated by measurement, cubic feet making a ton. The passenger fare from Portland to The Dalles was \$8, with 75 cents for meals. The fare from Portland to Lewiston was \$60, with meals and beds \$1.00 each.

It is said that a penniless traveler, who were worthy of help, was never denied passage on an Oregon Steamship Navigation vessel. Many deserving men were not only carried without charge but were given meals as well.

Overland passenger traffic became an important factor in transportation along a route in 1864, when Ben Holladay's stage line connected with the Oregon Steam Navigation Company's steamers at Wallula and carried passengers, by the way of Boise, Idaho, to western points. Fare by stage from Wallula to Boise was \$40; to Atchinson, Kansas, \$225. Each passenger was allowed twenty-five pounds of baggage. The excess baggage charge was \$1.50 a pound.

The Minnehaha, a small stern-wheeler about seventy feet long, was built and launched on Lake Oswego (or Sucker Lake as it was known) in 1866. The steamer made her first trip over the lake and up the Clatsop River on the twenty-fourth of October. Neither the route nor the boat were of much importance. The Minnehaha's sole claim to fame is that she was the only steamboat ever launched on Lake Oswego.

A rate war was waged between the People's Transportation and the newly organized Willamette Steam Navigation Company early in 1867. Fares on the Willamette dropped

until passengers could travel from Portland to Salem for fifty cents, to Albany for \$1.00, to Corvallis for \$1.50, with meals and berth free. No charge was made to passengers traveling between Portland and Oregon City. The freight rate between those two points dropped to fifty cents a ton. Contests of speed between boats of the two rival companies occurred daily. On one trip two of the competing steamboats raced all the way from Canemah to Salem. The competition was brought to an end in March, 1867, when the two companies consolidated.

The first steamer to run on the Coquille River was the Mary. This small vessel was built on that stream in 1871. She ran between the mouth of the river and the forks of the Coquille for about a year. The undertaking was not profitable enough to continue the run.

The completion of the Oregon City locks in 1873 was important to river transportation. Construction was finished in December, 1872, but the first steamer, the Maria Wilkins, passed through the locks on New Year's Day, 1873. She went on up the river, arriving at Harrisburg two days later, the first large steamer to reach a point so far inland.

The West Shore was one of the largest and swiftest sailboats constructed on the Pacific Coast. This vessel, 186 feet long, 22 feet wide and registering 188 tons, was launched at Coos Bay in 1874. In 1875, she left San Francisco a few minutes before the steamer Oriflame and arrived at Astoria two and a half hours ahead of the steamer, having made the trip in a little over two days. As far as is known no sailboat ever afloat on the Pacific Coast ever made such a remarkable record of speed. A year later she established a record by sailing from Portland to Liverpool in one hundred and one days. The next year she made the trip from San Francisco to the same port in one hundred and three days and returned in one hundred and ten. In addition to her sailing ability, the West Shore had an enormous carrying capacity. However, she was never considered a lucky ship. She was wrecked July 9, 1878, on Duxbury Reef.

A new type of marine craft, the whale back steamer, was introduced to the Pacific Coast with the arrival of the C. W. Wetmore in 1891. Built in Wisconsin, this craft carrying a cargo of 100,000 bushels of wheat for Liverpool made her way through the lakes and locks until she reached the sea. Then loaded with materials with which to construct other vessels of her type, she started on a long journey around the Horn to the Pacific Coast.

Few vessels have ever appeared in the Northwest which were more unlucky than the C. W. Wetmore. She lost her rudder along the California coast and drifted until the British steamer Zambesi started to tow her to the Columbia River. The hawser parted and the whaleback had a narrow escape in the breakers before another line could be put aboard. After the damage to her rudder was repaired at Astoria the C. W. Wetmore continued to Everett, reaching that port with her cargo in good shape.

The vessel was placed on the coal trade but scarcely made a trip without running aground, crashing into a wharf or colliding with another steamer. Every conceivable accident that could befall a steamer came her way. Finally, when enroute from Tacoma to San Francisco, September 8, 1892, she went ashore during a thick fog on the North Spit of Coos Bay. Distress signals were sent out as soon as she struck, but it was twenty-four hours before aid reached her. The crew was rescued but nothing could be done for the C. W. Wetmore. The tide lodged her parallel with the beach where she remained intact for several months before breaking up.

The first lightship on the Pacific coast, the Columbia River No. 50, was placed in service in 1892. She was built at the Union Iron Works of San Francisco and towed from there to her position near the mouth of the Columbia River by the tug W. S. S. S. The Columbia River No. 50 was 120 feet long, 26 feet, 7 inches beam, 12 feet, 8 inches hold, and had a steel frame with wood planking. The lightship had no propelling power except sails. She was equipped with two boilers to furnish steam for blowing a twelve inch fog whistle in thick weather and for hoisting the lights from the mast.

The cruisers Baltimore and Charleston, the largest vessels to enter the Columbia River up to that time, arrived at Astoria

on May 12, 1892, to participate in the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the Columbia. After the festivities, which lasted three days, the cruisers were taken to Portland for a few days visit.

The steamer Chilkat, which Captain David Morgan constructed for shipping in connection with his cannery, was rebuilt in 1892 and equipped with passenger accommodations. She commenced running between Portland and Alaska where her owner's interest in one of the largest canneries furnished sufficient business to pay all her running expenses. Consequently, passenger rates in the Chilkat were reduced and as the steamer was speedy and comfortable, she made heavy inroads of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company's revenues. Unlike any other competitive firms they had hitherto encountered the Chilkat's owner could not be bought off.

By 1895 the growing trade between the Orient and Northwestern ports furnished business for a large number of steamships. The Oregon Railway and Navigation Company and the North Pacific Steamship Company established a regular direct service with China and Japan with a vessel sailing every twenty-eight days. This service replaced the irregular Samuels line which had previously supplied the Orient run.

During the World War years, 1914 to 1918, shipbuilding became a major industry at Portland. Scores of ships slid into the Willamette from ways in that city, some of them never to be operated. The close of the war put an end to this thriving industry and very little ship building has been done since.

Within the last twenty years Portland has assumed the leading position in wheat distribution for the Pacific Northwest.

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