

# OREGON ODDITIES

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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of  
The Federal Writers' and Historical Records Survey Projects  
of the  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION OF OREGON  
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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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. At what point in the state can nine snow peaks be seen?

A. At Cow Canyon Junction on U.S. Highway 97 in Wasco county. The snow peaks which can be seen from that point are: Mt. Adams, 12,326 feet elevation; Mt. Hood, 11,253; Mt. Washington, 7,802; Mt. Jefferson, 10,495; Broken Top, 9,152; Three Fingered Jack, 7,848; and the Three Sisters. The altitudes of the "Sisters" are: North Sister, 10,094; Middle, 10,058; and South, 10,354.

(Bibliography: Oregon Guide Copy, Federal Writers' Project; Oregon Highway Maps)

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Q. Who discovered the Oregon Caves?

A. While on a hunting trip in August, 1874, Elijah Davidson followed a wounded bear until it disappeared into a hole. Davidson gathered material and made a torch, entered the hole, killed the bear, and in doing so discovered the caves. In 1877, Frank M. Nickerson, of Kerby, made the first extensive exploration. The Oregon Caves and the surrounding 480 acres were established as a national monument by presidential proclamation in 1909. Since 1934 the area has been under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior and the National Park Service. It is administered as an integral part of Crater Lake National Park.

(Bibliography: Oregon Blue Book)

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Q. What name was once proposed for the Cascade Mountains?

A. The Presidents Range, with each peak to be given the name of one of the presidents of the United States.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, June 30, 1927)

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Q. What is the origin of the name Multnomah?

A. The Multnomah Indians possessed the Willamette Valley from the Falls to the river's mouth, and this portion of the river was originally named for them. Lewis and Clark's Journals mention "Multnomah" and variations of the word. Dr. James in his journals of Lewis and Clark (page 692) says the word is a perversion of the Chinook word "mematlinomag" meaning "down river".

(Bibliography: Scott's History of Oregon, Volume II, p. 16, note 3)

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Q. What was the Valentine received by the Oregon pioneers in 1859?

A. Congress gave Oregon her statehood.

(Bibliography: Oregon Blue Book)

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Q. What states could be placed within Oregon's area and not be crowded?

A. New York, Vermont, Delaware and Maryland could be set down within the boundaries of Oregon and there would still be room enough left for two states the size of Rhode Island.

(Bibliography: World Almanac, 1938)

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Q. Where is the "Ten O'Clock Church"?

A. St. Peters Congregational Church of Beavercreek, in Clackamas county, is called the "Ten O'Clock Church". When it was built in 1883, a clock dial with the hands indicating ten o'clock was painted on the steeple.

(Bibliography: Oregon Historical Quarterly, March, 1938)

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Q. Where are Paris, London, Rome, Norway, and Denmark?

A. Paris and London are towns in Lane county. Rome is in Malheur county. Norway can be found in Crook county, and Denmark in Curry county.

(Bibliography: Oregon Road Maps)

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Q. What was the salary of the early governors?

A. The annual salary of Oregon's governors was \$1500 until the legislature of 1905 increased it to \$5000.

(Bibliography: Oregon Blue Book)

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Q. What outstanding service was performed by the Oregon troops during the Spanish-American War?

A. They were first to enter the walled city of Manila; took part in 42 battles, and while in almost constant action, made a marching record of 538 miles in three months.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, September 2, 1927)

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Q. When was Hudson's Bay Company founded?

A. On May 2, 1670, King Charles II of England, issued a charter to the Hudson's Bay Company, which more than a century later made history in early Oregon. The official name of the Hudson's Bay Company was "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay."

(Bibliography: Carey, Volume I; Oregonian, August 8, 1927)

When were fishing and boating popular sports on Portland's downtown streets?

During the flood of June, 1894, Portland's streets were inundated as far west as Third Street. According to the "Diary of a Man About Town" published in the Oregonian, "the business portion of the city was almost covered by backwater from the Columbia.....I was reprimanded by officers of the police for making my way diagonally across Third Street in dense (water) traffic.....Later, I did fish from the second story of the Crystal Palace saloon on First Street, but caught only chubs and carp which were not fit to eat."

Bibliography: Diary of a Man About Town, Oregonian, December 12, 1927)

What did "truck and turnover" and "tote your plunder" mean in pioneer slang?

"Truck and turnover" was a phrase used to indicate that a person was working for room and board. "Tote your plunder" meant carrying your baggage and other belongings.

Bibliography: Henry E. Reed, Oregonian, August 20, 1927)

What governor also served as governor of Utah?

George L. Woods, governor of Oregon from 1866 to 1870, was appointed governor of Utah by President Grant.

Bibliography: Roseburg Review, March 11, 1877)

When was the "New Deal" first brought to the attention of the residents of this state?

On Feb. 27, 1875, politics will break loose in Eugene and the surrounding country. General E. L. Applegate will expound his theory of a 'new deal'. He has for the last three years been talking of this doctrine of his, and at last it is to be made public." Thus reads an excerpt from a newspaper item.

Bibliography: Eugene City Guard, February 1875)

What counties have been named for presidents of the United States?

Grant, Jackson, Jefferson, Lincoln, Clark and Washington counties.

Bibliography: Oregon Blue Book)

Who was the pioneer leader for woman suffrage on the Pacific Coast?

Abigail Scott Duniway worked for forty-

one years to obtain for women the voting franchise. She realized her ambition on November 30, 1912, when Governor West signed the proclamation giving women equal voting rights with men in Oregon.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, December 14, 1912)

Q. What act of Congress promoted many pioneer marriages?

A. The Donation Land Claim Law passed in September, 1850, granted to every married couple the right to take up 640 acres of land. A single person could take up only 320 acres.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, August 6, 1927)

Q. Where was the first Federal building on the Pacific Coast?

A. During the summer of 1849 a small frame structure, 20 by 22 feet, was built in Astoria for a United States customs house.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, June 10, 1927)

Q. How was the state bird selected?

A. The Audubon Society in May, 1927, conducted a poll among school children to select a state bird. Voting narrowed down to six favorites. These were the Western meadowlark, bluebird, snowbird, song sparrow, varied thrush or robin, and white crowned sparrow, with the first two named being in the lead. When the final votes were tabulated it was found that the election was a "landslide" for the meadowlark.

(Bibliography: Oregon Journal, May 4, 5, 11, 17, and June 1, 1927)

Q. What was the "bone express"?

A. The ox-team immigrants on the Oregon Trail wrote messages on the whitening bones of the perished cattle found along the way for those who followed to read.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, July 30, 1927)

Q. What noted Oregonian received the first B. A. degree ever granted in the state?

A. Harvey W. Scott was graduated from Pacific University in 1863, the first graduate from an Oregon institution of higher education, and the only one of his class. When the Library Association was organized in Portland in 1864, Harvey W. Scott was the first librarian. Later he was editor of the Oregonian, a position he held for forty years. He was one of nine selected for the editors hall of fame in the University of Illinois.

(Bibliography: Oregon Historical Quarterly March, 1938; Oregonian, September 3, 1927, and November 22, 1927)

What was one of the most unusual public utilities ever granted a franchise in Oregon?

The board of trustees of "Dalles City" in 1862 granted James S. Reynolds permission to build and operate a toll boardwalk from Union Street to the Columbia River. Pedestrians paid a toll of ten cents for the privilege of using the walk. The depth of the mud on the lowlands made the venture successful.

(Bibliography: Scrapbook of Clippings, Newspaper Items, Volume 5, Fort Dalles Historical Society)

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Where is there a migrating post office?

The Clarno post office is generally located not far from Clarno Bridge on the John Day River. Sometimes the office is in Wasco county and sometimes in Wheeler, depending upon who is postmaster.

(Bibliography: Oregon Historical Quarterly, September, 1925)

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Why was there once opposition to a tax for the construction of a school house in Portland?

Benjamin Stark, for whom Stark Street is named, led the opposition against building a school house in 1856. The opposing faction declared that a jail was an imperative necessity in Portland and that the taxpayers could not afford both a jail and a school house.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, June 10, 1927)

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What does the name Corvallis mean?

The name was invented by Joseph C. Curry from two Latin words meaning "heart" and "valley".

(Bibliography: Lewis McArthur, Oregon Geographic Names, p. 88)

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Who is the "father" of the Oregon public school system?

George H. Atkinson was the first to advocate free public schools in the state. In 1849 Atkinson called a public meeting in Oregon City where the question, "Shall we organize a system of free schools?" was discussed. The result was a vote in favor of public schools.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, September 12, 1927)

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What did Peter H. Burnett, a leading figure of the immigration of 1848, say of the pioneers?

A. According to Burnett the pioneers "were all honest because there was nothing to steal, sober because there was nothing to drink, no misers because there was nothing to hoard, industrious because it was either work or starve."

(Bibliography: Peter H. Burnett, Recollections of An Old Pioneer)

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Q. Who built the first steam sawmill in Oregon?

A. Cyrus Reed and Stephen Coffin built the first steam sawmill in the state in 1850. The plant was located at the foot of Jefferson Street in Portland.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, Sept. 28, 1927)

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Q. What was the shortest prayer ever offered before an Oregon Legislature?

A. Joab Powell, a pioneer preacher, once served as chaplain of the territorial legislature. His prayer at the opening of the session was: "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

(Bibliography: Oregon Journal, Dec. 5, 1937)

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Q. Where is the world's largest shortcake made?

A. In Lebanon a strawberry festival is held annually featuring an immense strawberry shortcake. In 1934 it was 15 by 12 feet and weighed 4035 pounds. It is said to have served over ten thousand persons, although some of the visitors reported there was not enough shortcake to give everybody a portion.

(Bibliography: Oregonian, June 10, 1934)

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Q. When did Oregon have two governors in office at the same time?

A. In 1858, before Congress met and Oregon was not yet a state. Territorial Governor George L. Curry was still in office when State Governor Whiteaker was elected and inaugurated on July 8, 1858, but Oregon was not admitted to the Union until February, 1859.

(Bibliography: Carey, Volume II, p. 517)

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Q. When did Nebraska form a part of the boundary line of Oregon?

A. When Wasco county was originated in 1854 it reached to the crest of the Rocky Mountains on the Nebraska line. It was also bounded by California, Utah, and Nevada.

(Bibliography: World Almanac, 1938)

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