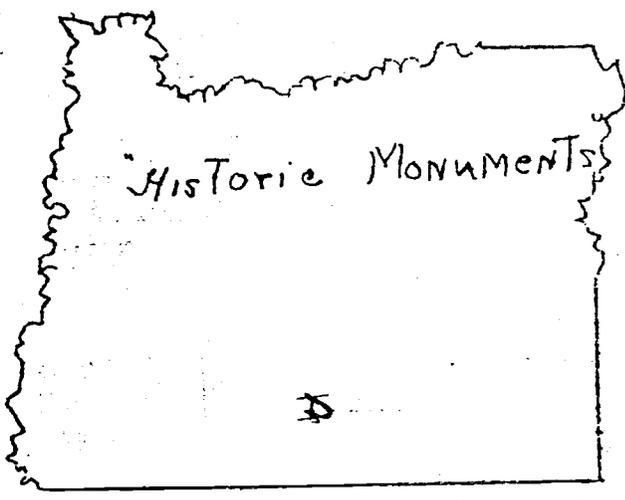


OREGON ODDITIES  
and  
ITEMS OF INTEREST



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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, 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. In Oregon as in all other states the work includes the state Guide, designed to acquaint Americans with America and to present to the visitor the history, industry, recreational advantages and scenic attractions of the state. The Oregon Guide, now in the final stages of editing will soon be added to the list of those already published which includes Idaho: A Guide in Word and Picture; Maine: A Guide "Down East"; Massachusetts: A Guide to its Places and People; New Hampshire: A Guide to the Granite State; Washington: City and Capital; Philadelphia: A Guide to the Birthplace of a Nation.

"I don't know anything about tombstones. We deal in monuments," declared Mr. H. J. Blaesing, Sr., of Portland. The word tombstone originated in England five or six centuries ago. It is too sepulchral, and has been in disuse in the United States since 1900.

"The monument business is the oldest in the world. It dates back almost to the Garden of Eden. In the Bible it says that a stone was placed on the grave of Abel. That was the first monument."

"Granite is used almost entirely for monuments," said Mr. Blaesing. "Marble crumbles. Most of it is softer than cube sugar." He considers the Cunha monument erected by Joseph Cunha at Echo in memory of his wife and son, the most beautiful in Oregon. A rock of ages design, with the figure of a woman clinging on the cross, it stands 14 feet high and weighs 20 tons.

Although Mr. Blaesing came to Oregon too late to know much about historic cemeteries, he has made monuments honoring historically prominent persons. A monument in memory of Sam L. Simpson, Oregon poet who died in 1899, was erected by the Sons and Daughters of Oregon Pioneers in 1929. Simpson is best known for his poem, "The Beautiful Willamette". His grave in the Lone Fir cemetery had been without a marker all those years.

"We are now working on a monument of one of the first white settlers in Tillamook county, which will be erected in the Trout cemetery at Tillamook. On the base will be inscribed:

Webley J. Hauxhurst  
Pioneer Patriot  
1809 ---- 1874

"He married the daughter of Chief Staywich, or Staymire, of the Yamhill Indians."

Webley J. Hauxhurst was born of Quaker parents in Long Island, N. Y. When he first came to Oregon, Hauxhurst settled at Champoeg. On funds furnished by Dr. McLoughlin in 1834, he built the first grist mill in the Oregon country. Lee and Frost, missionaries, claimed that he was the first white convert, baptized into the Methodist church in 1837. When Willamette University was chartered in 1853, Hauxhurst was elected to serve on the first board of directors.

While living at Salem he hauled freight to Portland, and helped to transport the first circus. His children were allowed to go, but were forbidden to look at the monkeys, as he considered them indecent. The children took a peek anyway, and later confessed they were indeed shocked by the monkey's antics.

An entry in the Methodist mission records reads: "Saturday, Feb. 25, 1837, Webley Hauxhurst married by Jason Lee to Miss Mary of Yamhill tribe at the Mission House, Willamette settlement." However, the date given in the Hauxhurst family Bible is March 16, 1837.

Hauxhurst bought a "squatter's right" from a man living at Bay Ocean, Tillamook county, where he lived until his death. Descendants of the family still live there. "Hoxie" as he was known around Tillamook, was captain of the schooner Champion plying between that port and Portland. He died January 23, 1874, and is buried in the Trout cemetery near Tillamook.

"Another monument we made," said Mr. Blaesing, "is one to the memory of Rev. J. A. Cornwall and family. It stands between the Southern Pacific right of way and the Pacific highway one mile north of Oakland, Oregon. The Cornwalls were Methodist Missionaries."

Peter Skene Ogden, 1794-1854, was buried at Oregon City, the grave unmarked until 1924. A monument weighing about a ton was erected during that year. Records in the city clerk's office at Oregon City said the grave was marked with cak sticks driven into the ground at each of the four corners.

"Leslie Scott and I found the grave after a whole day's work," said Mr. Blaesing. "It was all overgrown with ivy, but after we poked around a while, we found the sticks all right, and still intact, about a foot under the surface."

Peter Skene Ogden came to Oregon in 1818 as an employe of the NorthWest company whose headquarters were at Fort George, now Astoria. After 1821 he was associated with the Hudson's Bay Company, that company having consolidated with the NorthWest company. He later became a Chief Factor, which was the highest field position in the company. As his hair became white the Indians respectfully called him "Old Whitehead." Both the Indians

and the white settlers considered Ogden to be fearless. His strategy in dealing with the Indians enabled him to rescue the survivors of the Whitman massacre who were held captives.

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When asked if he had ever seen or carved any unusual epitaphs, Mr. Blaesing said, "Well, here's one you might find amusing. A woman had this line engraved on the monument for her husband: 'The light of my life has gone out.' In a couple of years she married again. She used to go to her first husband's grave to leave flowers. Each time she became more dissatisfied with the inscription, but she didn't know what to do about it. It would have required a great deal of work and expense to have it removed and another epitaph engraved. She consulted her minister. He scratched his head and thought it over. Finally he said, 'Add another line, saying: But I've struck another match.' She agreed to that solution, and as far as I know, the epitaph is still on that monument.

"Then, there was a Myrtle Point bachelor who was a woman-hater. He wrote an inscription for his own monument, stating the exact reason for his state of bachelorhood. The monument was not our work, but here is a copy of the inscription:

To an independent good  
looking old Batchelor  
who in his younger days  
preferred living a  
single life rather  
than get married and  
have a petticoat boss  
ruling over him the  
rest of his life and  
perhaps thru an  
endless eternity

Thou Turnest man  
O Lord to dust  
From whence he  
first was made  
and when Thou Sayest  
the word return  
Tis instantly obeyed.

William Hartley  
born  
May 10 1840  
died  
August 4 1913

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In the old churchyards and behind dilapidated fences on hillsides a few elaborate inscriptions can still be found although neither Oregon, nor any of the states in the West, has ever indulged in the old-fashioned and picturesque tombstone inscriptions commonly used in New England in the early days. Seldom inscribed on latter-day monuments is anything but the dates of birth, death, and possibly marriage.

To quote the Oregonian, March, 1938 "Probably the truth is that the twentieth century uses the device of modesty to hide its desire to forget. Those who have gone lose their characters. They become only numbers. And the genealogists of the future prowling around will collect nothing but dates and places."

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Father Francis Norbert Blanchet's final resting place in the St. Paul cemetery in Marion county is marked by a tall white marble monument. The inscription identifies him as the "First Archbishop Oregon City and Pioneer of the Cross of the N.W." The cemetery was established in the late 1830's by Father Blanchet, and is regarded as the oldest white man's burial ground in Oregon. Before becoming Archbishop, Blanchet was appointed by the Archbishop of Quebec, Montreal district, to the charge of the Oregon Mission, with the title of vicar-general. He said the first mass at St. Paul on January 5, 1838. A few years later he sailed to Europe for more help, and returned with five secular priests, three seminarians, three Jesuit Fathers, and seven Sisters of Notre Dame. After spending the last thirty-five years of his life at the head of the ecclesiastical province of Oregon, Archbishop Blanchet died June 18, 1883.

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In the Tualatin Plains Presbyterian churchyard stands a monument in memory of Joe Meek, dedicated by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1929. Joe Meek who made a trip to Washington bearing a memorial praying for federal aid just after the Whitman massacre, was rewarded by being made the first U. S. marshal in the Oregon Territory. The bill for the organization of the territory passed the senate August 13, 1848, and was signed by President Polk the next day. Historians regard Col. Meek's presence in Washington and his being a cousin of President Polk as favorable contributory factors.

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On the crest of the knoll near the church in the Zena cemetery in Polk county are four large mountain laurel trees. Smiley Purvine planted one at each corner of the Purvine lot to watch over the grave of his wife. He was later buried there. A large cut granite monument now stands between two of the laurel trees. Mr. Purvine was a traveling dentist who went all over the country treating his patients where he found them.

General Joseph Lane is buried in the Umpqua Valley, a mile from Roseburg. The mausoleum is neat and plain. On a once white slab of marble is inscribed:

In memory of  
 General Joseph Lane  
 Born Dec. 14, 1807  
 Died April 19, 1881

Joseph Lane was appointed first governor of the Oregon Territory by President Polk after the governorship had been declined by Abraham Lincoln. Lane was elected general by the volunteer troops in the Rogue River war with the Indians. Fort Lane and Lane county were both named in his honor.

At the southeast corner of the Astoria city hall is the grave of Donald McLavish, swaggering fur trader who lost his life in 1814 while crossing the Columbia river. A stone slab, protected by a wire screen, marks the grave. McLavish, a retired partner in the British Northwest Fur company, was called from retirement to manage the newly organized department of the Columbia when the English company took over Astoria and rechristened it Fort George. According to Ross Cox's journals this grave stood immediately back of Fort George.

Alexander Henry, who also had a part in the robust drama of the West, and who was notorious for his alleged practice of using laudanum in wine to subdue the Indians, lost his life on the same trip, and is buried nearby, but no marker indicates his grave.

For many years the last resting place of Madame Pierre Dorion, heroine of the Wilson Price Hunt Overland Astorian Expedition, was unknown. Recently the grave was discovered under the little Catholic church at St. Louis, Oregon. A bronze plaque bearing the inscription: "In mem-

ory of Madam (Marie) Dorion, Heroine of the Astorian Expedition of 1811-1814" was erected by the Oregon State Society of the United Daughters of 1812 on April 7th, 1935, to honor the courageous Indian woman whose life vied with that of Sacajawea in dramatic incidents.

When the Hunt party was lost and starving in the Grande Ronde valley of eastern Oregon the members demanded that Pierre butcher the horse that Madame Dorion, an expectant mother, was riding. Pierre refused and with his little family lagged behind while his wife gave birth to her child. Two days later the Dorions overtook the rest of the party, and although the baby died, Madame Dorion lived to experience many other thrilling adventures. The best known of these concerns her wintering in the Blue mountains alone with her two children and without food. The resourceful Madame Dorion made a rude shelter, butchered the horse she was riding, dried the meat, and with her children managed to subsist upon this fare.

Then the food was almost exhausted she attempted to cross the mountains. After lying three days blinded by the snow she left her hungry children on Meacham creek, and crawled on her hands and knees toward the campfire of Walla Walla Indians. She was so weak she often fell asleep on the way. The Indians befriended her and in the night brought the children to her.

A granite shaft marks the burial site of Major Victor Trevitt, early day settler, gambler, tavern keeper and politician of The Dalles, where he sleeps alone on Memaloose Island, former death haunt of the mid-Columbia tribes. "I'll take my chances with the Indians in the resurrection," Trevitt often said before his death in 1885. "They are more honest than the whites." After he was buried on Memaloose Island, 12 miles below The Dalles, the Indians took many of their dead away. Finally, months ago, when it was known that Bonneville Dam would raise the upper river waters, causing them to overflow much of the island's three-acre extent, the remaining Indian bones were disinterred from the sandy grave pits and removed to the Washington mainland. Today Vic Trevitt sleeps alone on the shrunken half-acre island, the shaft over his grave a landmark for river mariners.