

HAVE YOU ANY OREGON ANCESTOR?

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We all take it for granted that we are born, but many of us get into trouble when we try to prove it. Perhaps you remember difficulties that you had in getting a birth certificate to submit to the Public Employees Retirement Board. Some individuals may have had a worse time than you did, and the problem would be more serious if you had to prove that your father was born, that your father's father was born, and so on back into the limbo of lost facts. You would have embarked on a great detective hunt, from the known to the unknown, the sort of search that can come to absorb your attention. There is no one more enthusiastic than a seeker after genealogical knowledge, or perhaps as boring, at least to those who do not appreciate the zest of the quest.

You have to be prepared for shocks when you start looking for genealogical facts. One lady, in good faith, asked an archival attendant for information about her "dear grandfather, who came over on the Mayflower, served in the Revolution at the battle of Bunker Hill, and was a veteran of the War of 1812." The only truth in her family tradition was his distinguished service in the War of 1812, and he proved to be the natural son of one of our great Revolutionary figures. It was six months before the lady was ready to look for more information on what turned out to be an extraordinarily able ancestry. At least she swallowed the initial facts and was willing to look further into the past.

We are all related to history in that our ancestors participated in history. They signed petitions to right wrongs, they committed wrongs, their court suits are the basis of our legal system, they grew food for the tables of the

great, and even though their tale may be told in simple words, it is worth knowing how you are related to our common past. One article can only introduce you to the field of historical and genealogical research, but a description of the sources for information relating to your Oregon ancestors might show you how to do genealogical research. It is not a simple job to trace a family, and it takes a lot of sleuthing.

If you have an Oregon ancestry, you must of necessity start with the data that your family can furnish. But first you must be armed with the necessary questions so that you do not have to ask questions over and over again. Be sure to keep the data on each person together. You will want to know:

1. Where and when were you born?
2. Who were your parents?
3. Where and when were they born, married, and when and where did they die?
4. Where else did they live and when? What education did they get? What did they do for a living? With whom were they associated? What was their religion? Did they hold political office? Did they see military service?
5. Who were their brothers and sisters, when and where were they born, when and where were they married and to whom, and when did they die? Did they have children? (Question 4 would apply to each brother, sister or child.)
6. Are there any records, family bibles, correspondence, diaries, memoirs, account books or pictures?
7. Who were your grandparents? (And then the questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 repeat themselves for the grandparents, their brothers and sisters, and their parents.)

If your family co-operates, everything is all right. On the other hand,