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## Offbeat Oregon History

To get help building  
Tillamook Rock Light,  
supervisors had to be  
sneaky

BY FINN J.D. JOHN  
For the Sentinel

The eight strangers must have been a little puzzled when they arrived in Astoria in the fall of 1878.

They'd been brought in at considerable expense from far away by the U.S. Lighthouse Board to work on a new lighthouse construction project. But now that they were finally here, they weren't even allowed to go into town for a drink. They were soon whisked away, across the river onto the lonesome wilds of the Washington Territory, and put up in an empty lightkeeper's house at Cape Disappointment.

So, where was the lighthouse they'd been hired to work on? All they knew was that it was on a small, rocky island. But where?

More than three weeks dragged by. Finally, when the seas were relatively calm, the revenue cutter Thomas Cor-

win arrived to take them to the job site. An hour or so later, their eyes widened with horror as they beheld what they'd signed up to build.

Staring at the tiny speck of granite jutting out of the flying spray and foam, the workers now understood why their employer had been so secretive — and why it had been necessary to recruit them from far-distant cities that had never heard of Tillamook Rock.

The Rock was a fist-shaped hunk of granite shooting straight up out of the sea, a mile and a half away from the coast of Oregon, rising to a height of about 120 feet above the waves. And although the day was calm and the sea fairly smooth, the workers could immediately see that getting onto the rock would be neither easy nor safe. Indeed, as they would later learn, it was word of master mason John R. Trewaves' death trying to clamber onto the rock — he'd slipped and fallen into the sea and been sucked under before anyone could grab him, never to be seen again — that had made it impossible for the government to find anyone in Oregon willing to work on the job.

Now, looking up at this horrible pile of granite from the thwarts of their

surfboat, as the unruly and frothy seas sloshed against the rock, they were about to perform the exact maneuver that had killed Trewaves. They would have to wait for the boat to be in the crest of a wave, leap onto the rock as the boat descended 10 feet into the wave's trough, and scramble as fast as they could to get high enough that the next wave would not wash them off.

Well, they may have been suckered into taking the job, and they were surely scared nearly out of their wits — but the eight quarrymen were not cowards. They stepped forward, ready to do their best. But only four of them were able to get onto the rock before the surfboat caught a wave badly and smashed into the granite surface, doing substantial damage and sending the boat hurrying back to the cutter.

With a line stretched between the cutter and the rock, they proceeded to load hammers, drills, ringbolts, food, water and canvas tents. And then the cutter retreated, leaving those four men behind, alone on a half-acre guano-covered rock jutting out of an increasingly angry sea.

Those four men were, as a near-certainty, the first humans ever to spend a night on Tillamook Rock. In fact, it was five days before the seas moderated enough to land the rest of the par-

ty. And almost as soon as they did, the rock welcomed them with one of the massive gales for which that corner of Oregon is famous. The wind screamed, the seas hit the rock hard enough that the men could feel the stone tremble beneath their feet, and sheets of flying, frothy seawater blanketed the entire island. Everything the men had was soaked through with saltwater.

But they made it through, and soon spectators on the mainland could watch their progress through spyglasses from the point. From the beginning, the locals had viewed the scheme to put a lighthouse on the rock as sheer madness, but now it looked as if they were actually going to pull it off.

But then, there hadn't really been much of a choice. By the late 1870s it had become all too clear to the U.S. Lighthouse Board that a light would have to be stationed south of the Columbia. There were, at the time, two at its mouth — Point Adams on the Oregon side, and Cape Disappointment on the Washington shore — but these couldn't be seen far enough out to sea to keep ships from getting into deadly trouble on the shoals and reefs off Tillamook Head, especially on foggy days.

So the government allocated \$50,000 for the job and started looking for a good place to put it.

It quickly became clear that there really wasn't one. Tillamook Head seemed a logical place, but it was 1,000 feet high; a light there would be invisible in heavy fog — exactly the weather condition in which a light was most needed.

And then ... there was The Rock. So Tillamook Rock was scouted by district lighthouse superintendent H.S. Wheeler — who managed, after many attempts, to get first himself and then, on a second attempt, his surveying instruments onto the rock in the summer of 1879.

He was almost certainly the first human ever to set foot on the thing.

The investigation proved that a lighthouse could be put on the rock. But it would require a great deal of dynamite to level off its top, and getting on and off the thing was a matter of deadly peril — as was soon demonstrated by the death of John Trewaves.

Still, the only alternative was to accept the loss of dozens of lives and thousands of tons of shipping every year in preventable shipwrecks. That was unacceptable. And so the Lighthouse Board agreed to go ahead with it and sent emissaries to San Francisco and other faraway ports in search of

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## Cold and flu: Protect yourself by eating right

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD  
For the Sentinel

Cold and flu are a larger burden than we may think. Between treatments, illness-compromised productivity and lost workdays, it is estimated that the common cold alone costs the U.S. \$40 billion each year.

We all know the basics for reducing exposure — wash your hands, avoid touching your face, and avoid being exposed to people who are already ill. Some people may choose the influenza vaccine; however, it is important to



know that it is not very effective. An independent analysis of flu vaccine studies by the Cochrane Collaboration found that even under ideal conditions (vaccine completely matching circulating flu virus), four percent of unvaccinated people and one percent of vaccinated people became infected — only a minor benefit. The authors estimated that under typical conditions, 100 people need to be vaccinated to avoid one set of influenza symptoms, or you would have to be vaccinated every year for 100 years to save yourself one flu episode. Interestingly, the study showed that flu vaccine did NOT significantly affect the number of people hospitalized or working days lost, and did not prevent flu-associated complications or those rare flu-associated deaths. Those of us who eat health-

fully need not worry about the dangers of the flu. Excellent nutrition can reduce our vulnerability to infection and reduce the length and severity of illness if we do become infected. Many micronutrients are required to support proper function of the immune system, and phytochemicals from colorful produce have additional antimicrobial and immune-boosting effects:

### Mushrooms

Mushrooms have a unique ability to activate the body's natural immune defenses. More exotic varieties like reishi and shiitake mushrooms have beneficial effects on immune cells, and even the common white button mushrooms may enhance immune defenses in the mouth and respiratory tract. Remember that mushrooms should only be eaten cooked: several raw culinary mushrooms contain a potentially harmful compound called agaritine, and cooking mushrooms significantly reduces the agaritine content.

### Cruciferous vegetables

The cruciferous family of vegetables includes kale, collards, mustard greens, arugula, watercress, broccoli, broccoli rabe, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi and more. In addition to their anti-cancer effects, cruciferous vegetable phytochemicals also support the immune system and have antimicrobial properties.

To maximize the benefits from cruciferous vegetables, chop them finely, eat them raw and chew them well; the enzyme that produces the active compounds (called ITCs) is activated by disrupting the plant cells and deactivated by heat. However, you can still get ITCs from your cooked cruciferous vegetables: chop them finely before you begin to cook and add some raw cruciferous to the meal. For instance, if you are eating cooked broccoli, add some shredded cabbage to your salad to produce some extra ITCs.

### Berries

Berries are powerful anti-cancer foods that also offer protection against viruses. Antioxidants called flavonoids, which are abundant in berries, have antiviral activity. In fact, if you do get the flu, taking anthocyanin-rich elderberry juice may even shorten the duration of your symptoms. Berries and grapes are also rich in resveratrol, another antioxidant phytochemical with strong antiviral effects. Plus, strawberries are high in vitamin C, which protects immune cells from oxidative damage. The benefits of berries go far beyond cold and flu protection. Flavonoids activate the body's natural detoxification enzymes, block the growth of cancer cells, decrease inflammation, and support proper blood pressure regulation.

### Onions and garlic

There is no convincing evidence for using garlic supplements for symptoms of the common cold. However, eating garlic and onions daily has clear benefits when it comes to cancer prevention and may also help to build immune defenses and fight off respiratory viruses. Like cruciferous vegetables, the active compounds in onions and garlic are produced when the plant cells are disrupted, so they are best eaten raw, chopped finely and chewed well.

### Appropriate supplements

Vitamin D and zinc are important players in immune function, so maintaining adequate stores of these micronutrients will also help to protect against cold and flu. Children given vitamin D supplements throughout the winter reduced the occurrence of flu compared to a placebo group, and taking supplemental zinc regularly was found to slightly reduce the number of colds caught by children. Since vitamin D is not readily available in the food supply, and zinc is not highly absorbed from plant foods, well-designed supplements are a good choice.

If you do get a cold, treat it wisely. Many cold remedies are ineffective, and some may even prolong the illness. For example, megadoses of vitamin C do not prevent colds or reduce symptoms, and fever-reducing medications actually hinder the

body's attack on the infection. (In my book Super Immunity, I evaluate a number of common cold and flu remedies.)

Don't be alarmed if your cold symptoms last longer than you expect. On average, patients report that their common cold symptoms last one and a half to two weeks. In children, earaches tend to last anywhere from less than one day to nine days, sore throat 2-7 days, cough up to 25 days, and the common cold seven to 15 days. In time, the body will clear the virus on its own. Remember, over-the-counter medications merely mask symptoms and may even impair healing. However, if you experience a sudden worsening of symptoms, especially including labored breathing, or a fever above 103 degrees for three days, then it is time to call the doctor.

Of course, as your diet improves, you will be less likely to become ill, and if you do, you will recover more quickly. This year, to protect yourself against cold and flu, get enough sleep, avoid putting your hands near your nose or mouth, and eat healthfully. A nutrient-rich diet provides your body with a spectrum of immunity-boosting phytochemicals that also protect against heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

*Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine.*

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary.

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