



OPINION

Offbeat Oregon History

'Graveyard of the Pacific' was not easily tamed

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

On the morning of Sept. 18, 1853, the American bark Oriole was heavily laden with building materials and waiting for a favorable breeze to kick up so she could cross the Columbia River Bar.

Around noon one did, and the Oriole unfurled canvas and got under way, battling against the river's current with a slow southwest breeze filling her sails.

If you're familiar with these old-time bar stories, you can probably guess what happened next. The breeze petered out, leaving the ship becalmed and drifting at the mercy of the currents. The currents drifted the ship across a shoal, and she struck bottom in 17 feet of water. The current continued dragging her across this sandbar, pounding the hull against the bottom with every wave trough. The rudder was torn free almost immediately. Seams opened up, and the pumps clogged with sand.

The weather being fair, the crew was able to abandon the Oriole in reasonably orderly fashion, and 15 minutes later the ship drifted free of the shoals, turned on her beam ends and sank out of sight.

For the men in the lifeboats, shivering through the long, cold night until the morning sun could light their way to Astoria, it was a particularly powerful and ironic reminder of the importance of their mission. They had come to Astoria as part of a construction crew tasked with building a lighthouse at the mouth of the deadly River of the West – a project that, when finished, would help other ships avoid the Oriole's fate.

Unfortunately, it would be a while before they could start. The Oriole's cargo had been the materials that they were supposed to use to build it.

From the very first time a ship of commerce ventured out on its treacherous waters, it was clear to everyone involved that the federal government was going to have to spend money – lots of money – to make the Columbia River Bar safer for ships to cross.

The first ship to officially survey it was a British ship, in 1837 – at the time, the Oregon country was under a joint occupancy agreement between the U.S. and Great Britain. The ship's commander, Sir Edward Belcher, immediately identified the biggest problem with the bar: It was a 25,000-acre patch of shallow open water, six miles wide, with a six-knot current racing across it and a sandy bottom that shifted dramatically from year to year. One year the north channel might be the only way in; the next, that channel could be impossible, and the only available channel might be one that runs directly into the teeth

of the prevailing summer winds. And short of conducting a full survey every time one arrived off the bar, one never really knew.

It would be many years and millions of dollars, before this problem was solved with the construction of the jetties; it would also take railroad equipment, of which there wouldn't really be any in Oregon until the 1880s. So the government had commissioned a lighthouse on the north side of the river as a suitable first step. With its help, at least ships coming in from the sea in the darkness or fog would be able to tell where the river was. And the Oriole had been dispatched from San Francisco to get the process started.

Thanks to the Oriole's sinking, it wasn't until 1856 that the Cape Disappointment Light was placed in service, and it was soon followed by additional lights at Point Adams, North Head and Tillamook Rock, along with a dedicated lightship securely and permanently anchored offshore. After that, it was possible for ships to know where they were on the bar, even after dark. That, combined with regular surveys and an intrepid cadre of bar pilots who kept up on its shifting status month by month, made the crossing much safer – safe enough for the ports of Portland and Astoria to thrive.

Meanwhile, the government also tried to mitigate the human damage with life stations and lookout towers, so that if a ship did get into trouble on the bar, help could be sent at once. Ladies from Astoria would come to the shore to watch these life-station rescuers practice during the summertime, refining and improving their skills for the deadly winter storm season when their skills would be put to the test, sometimes on a weekly basis.

Then, in 1885 – two years after the transcontinental railroad first arrived in Portland – the government finally was able to set about solving the real problem on the bar, by starting construction of what we know today as the South Jetty.

A big receiving dock was built at Fort Stevens, and railroad workers got started running a spur line from the dock out to the site of the future jetty. Five steam locomotives were barged down the river to the dock, with 65 dump cars to be filled with rock.

The jetty construction technique was simple in concept but not exactly easy to do. A railroad trestle was built out over the sea. The locomotive would push the dump cars, loaded with giant boulders barged in from upriver, out over the water, where the rocks would be dumped in. Then, back it would go for another load,

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A little help here?

Up Talamena Drive, our friends have a beautiful home for sale. It has been on the market for a while. Just recently, it has been broken into. The home had a movie room, and the movie screen and speakers were taken.

Since I had read in last week's paper that the Brewstation was robbed and was missing sound equipment, I thought that the local police would be interested. So I called to report that the home had been broken into and burglarized. The next day, I called again to report that there was a car in the driveway of the home on Talamena. It turns out that it was a stolen car.

Something about the person answering the phone at the police department, made me feel like they could care less.

As concerned friends and neighbors, we just want the home to sell. But, if a homeless person had decided to move in? (We had suspicions that maybe a strange person was inside the house.)

Property taxes are high; the taxes on the home on Talamena might be in excess of \$4000. I would hope that a Cottage Grove officer might assist if the Sheriff's Office were too busy. It is a judgment call.

Sue Flint
Cottage Grove

Eye-opener

I have just returned from a four-month journey to Eastern Oregon. It was wonderful. There is almost no litter in the streets. People do not idle their cars. They pick up after themselves.

It is a real shock to come back. Litter is everywhere. I talked with some friends on South Fifth Street. There were two cars stolen this last summer, despite supposed cameras to catch the perpetrators.

Irresponsible noise is everywhere. Peace and quiet, anyone?

My point is that I live on South Sixth Street, and I know what the meth-head robbers and vandals look like and act like. They are typically young males and females in their early to mid 20s. They ride bicycles that are designed for children of about 10 years of age. They currently have a pattern of going north to south on both Fifth and Sixth streets. The robbery of the Brewstation is just the latest. They are most active late at night, needless to say.

There are good ways to put a stop to this menace. Station an unmarked police car somewhere around south Fifth or Sixth streets, or one of the side streets. I guarantee that you will catch a fishy one within an hour. Look for these bicyclists driving erratically in the wrong lanes or sidewalks. At night, look for these same persons that do not have proper and legally required front and rear bicycle lights.

Finally: If you see something, say something.

Charles Ames
Cottage Grove

Keeping the school gardens growing

Our community is fortunate to have gardens at all of our K-12 school campuses for hands-on and outdoor learning. As you can imagine, getting irrigation systems set up and then keeping all the gardens growing throughout the summertime is a challenge. Grandparents, parents, students, teachers and friends spent countless hours volunteering their time to tend plants at all of the schools this summer. Thank you to Suzanne Keavney, Tara Eckstine and family, Maria Deitrich and family, Scott Pierce, Jim Brownson, Darrell Simonsen, Paula Mance, Steve Barnes, Trish Gillespie, David Cunningham, Jon and Ally Albrecht, the Walker Family, Katy Vaughn, Karen Dirks, Aleece and Hannah Faught, Val Rocco, Deb Henderson, Shari Skadburg, Molly Northrup, Matt Hall and Bill Bartram. Students are now back at school and in the gardens exploring, learning and, of course, harvesting. We are thankful.

Melissa Fery
SLSD Farm to School Coordinator

How are diabetes and cancer connected?

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Over 25 million people in the United States have Type 2 diabetes, and that figure doesn't even count the seven million who have diabetes and

remain undiagnosed. The dangerously high prevalence of overweight and obesity is at the heart of this problem. Diabetes is the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States, is the leading cause of blindness and kidney failure in adults, and

doubles the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Diabetes also increases the risk of several cancers. In a number of studies, diabetic patients have been shown to have an elevated risk of colorectal cancer, and non-diabetics with elevated postprandial glucose levels also have a higher risk of colorectal cancer than individuals with normal glucose tolerance. A review that analyzed data from several studies found that diabetic patients are 30 percent more likely to develop colorectal cancer, 20 percent more likely to develop breast cancer and 82 percent more likely to develop pancreatic cancer.

How could diabetes influence the development of cancer? The



high blood glucose levels and the resultant elevated insulin response associated with Type 2 diabetes affect all tissues of the body. It has been hypothesized that diets high in sugars and white flour increase the risk of cancers because of their impact on these factors, particularly elevated insulin.

Scientists believe that insulin therapy and elevated insulin levels contribute to the association between diabetes and colorectal cancer. Insulin in high concentrations may bind to the receptor for a growth factor called insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1) – this interaction has the potential to promote growth and division of cancer cells. Cancerous cells also often have elevated levels of insulin receptors, and when insulin binds these receptors it has growth-promoting effects.

There is much evidence supporting the possibility that chronic exposure to diets rich in

refined carbohydrates may act directly to promote cancer development. Foods with a high glycemic load (such as sugar and white flour products) produce dangerous spikes in blood glucose, consequently resulting in high insulin production. Diets including large quantities of high GL foods increase the risk of several chronic diseases, including cancers. For example, a meta-analysis of many studies found a 26 percent increase in colorectal cancer risk in people who consumed the most high glycemic load foods in their diets.

I have observed in my medical practice that a nutritional diet combined with moderate exercise can reverse diabetes in 90 percent of patients and that an aggressive nutritional approach is more effective and much safer than conventional drug-centered care. The best diet for preventing or reversing diabetes is also the best diet for cancer protec-

tion. It is a diet with a high nutrient per calorie ratio – including lots of green and non-starchy vegetables, beans, raw nuts and seeds and some fresh fruit; limiting animal products and avoiding sweeteners, oils and white flour. The high levels of dietary micronutrients fuel cellular repair, reduce body fat and heal the body from the inside out, resulting in a dramatic reversal of heart disease and diabetes, offering dramatic protection against cancer.

"The End of Diabetes" is a must read for all Americans who are overweight and those with pre-diabetes or diabetes.

Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his informative website at DrFuhrman.com.

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116 N. Sixth Street · P.O. Box 35 · Cottage Grove, OR 97424

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