

## LOCAL, STATE &amp; REGION

UNsung HERO, MYSTERIOUS ARTWORK | SLAVE ON THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

## Bust of Black pioneer goes up in Portland

BY ANDREW SELSKY  
Associated Press

Last year, protesters against racial injustice toppled numerous statues around the country. Now, one of the first works of art to emerge in their place depicts an unsung hero of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

A huge bust of York, a Black man who was enslaved by William Clark and who was the first African American to cross the continent and reach the Pacific Ocean, is sitting atop a pedestal amid a lushly forested park in Portland. It was placed there in the dead of night last weekend by persons unknown.

People have flocked to the bust, which seems to be at least 4 feet tall, in Mount Tabor Park. The artist's depiction of York shows him seemingly deep in thought or even sad, his eyes cast downward. York hadn't been painted contemporaneously, so how his face really looked is unknown.

Officials in the city, which has been an epicenter of Black Lives Matter protests since the killing of George Floyd, love what the head of the parks department called "guerrilla art."

"This past summer, there's been concern about some of the public art that many states have displayed, and so folks really see this installation as a bit of a reckoning," Portland Parks and Recreation Director Adena Long said in an interview. "The story of York is really compelling and very sad."

Passersby stare up at the bust or touch the tall stone pedestal. The anonymous artist affixed a plaque describing how York was an integral part of the 1804-1806 expedition to find an all-water route to the Pa-



A bust of York, a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition, is seen on Mount Tabor in southeast Portland on Sunday. The statue appeared the day before.

Mark Graves/The Oregonian

cific, but then was denied his freedom by Clark after it was over.

Since the killing of Floyd in Minneapolis last May, hundreds of symbols of racism and other dark chapters of U.S. history have been removed. Among them were at least 167 Confederate symbols, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Deciding what to replace downed statues with, commissioning the artists and having the work done takes time.

Whoever made the gigantic head of York circumvented all that by producing the bust — officials believe it might have been done with a 3D printer — getting it into the park without being detected and then placing it on top of the pedestal, which itself is around 10 feet high.

It's likely the artist had collaborators to install it. On Friday night, as is customary, park rangers shut gates on the roads and locked them at 10 p.m. closing time. On

Saturday morning, a maintenance worker saw the York bust, perched on a pedestal where a statue of a conservative figure who opposed women's right to vote had stood until someone knocked it over last year.

"None of those gates had been damaged. None of those locks had been damaged. And so we do feel that this was brought in on foot," said Tim Collier, community relations manager for the city parks department.

They had to transport the bust, which seems to be composed of plastic or composite of synthetic material, at least 1,000 feet uphill from the nearest road access.

Collier said that in the legends of the expedition, York's role has been overlooked, and that the bust "is really furthering that conversation here in our very, very white city."

Long hopes the artist comes forward to possibly have a conversation about making York a permanent art installation.

## Oregon-Idaho boundary measure gets on another county ballot

BY PAT CALDWELL  
Malheur Enterprise

VALE — Malheur County voters will face a ballot measure in May linked to the movement to shift a number of rural Oregon counties into Idaho.

The measure would require the Malheur County Court to meet three times a year to consider a plan to move the Oregon-Idaho border.

Proponents of Measure 23-64 acquired enough signatures Feb. 17 to put it on the May 18 special election ballot, said Gail Trotter, Malheur County clerk.

The measure needed 539 signatures and Trotter said her office was able to validate 563.

Voter approval would require the county court to meet and discuss "how to promote the interests of Malheur County in any negotiations, regarding the relocation of the Oregon-Idaho border."

The measure is backed by the group Greater Idaho. The goal of the nonprofit is to slice off 18 counties and incorporate them into Idaho.

Mike McCarter, a La Pine resident and president of Greater Idaho, said he was pleased the measure gained enough signatures.

In November, voters in Jefferson and Union counties approved measures pushing their leaders to meet about the boundary change.

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