

Salem Remembers Timeline 1850 - 1859

1850s | Oregon's Chinese Heritage

Chinese men began immigrating to California and Oregon in the 1850s. They worked as miners, agricultural labor and railroad construction. Others were service workers and sometimes owned small businesses. Immigration of women from China was extremely limited until the 1920s.

1850s | Salem's Public School

There was one public school in Salem which was the old log schoolhouse at Marion and Commercial Streets. This school only served children from white families. By 1866 there were three public schools in Salem.

1850, September 18 | U.S. Fugitive Slave Act

Passed on September 18, 1850 by Congress, The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was part of the Compromise of 1850. The act required that slaves be returned to their owners, even if they were in a free state. The Act also made the federal government responsible for finding, returning, and trying escaped slaves.

1850, June 5 | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

An Act Authorizing the Negotiation of Treaties with the Indian Tribes in the Territory of Oregon, for the Extinguishment of their Claims to Lands Lying West of the Cascade Mountains was passed creating The *Willamette Valley Treaty Commission*. "To meet constitutional requirements, Territorial Delegate Samuel Thurston told Congress that extinguishing Native title to land was the "first prerequisite step" to settling Oregon's land question. Therefore, before lawmakers voted for the Donation Land Law, they passed legislation authorizing commissioners to negotiate treaties to extinguish Indian title and to remove tribes "and leave the whole of the most desirable portion open to white settlers." LB



Anson Dart (1797-1879)

1850, June 21 | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

President Zachary Taylor appointed Anson Dart as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon Territory. LB

1850, September 27 | U.S. Donation Land Act

This Act, created by Samuel Thurston, legitimized the 640-acre claims provided to white couples (excluding Black and Hawaiian people) in 1843 under the Oregon Provisional Government. If citizens arrived after 1850, a married couple could receive 320 acres. In order to gain legal title to land, citizens had to live and make improvements on the land for four years. A huge land rush was created out of this Act that led to further dispossession and oppression against tribal members. Under this act, the Office of Surveyor-General of Public Lands in Oregon Territory was formed, and established a procedure for land surveying. "Within five years, the number of claimants numbered more than 7,000, most settling in the Willamette Valley." LB

1851 | Oregon's Territorial Capital

The Territorial Legislature in Oregon City passed a law moving the capital of the Oregon Territory to Salem. Salem became the permanent state capital in 1864

1851 | Oregon's Black Heritage

Jacob Vanderpool, a Black business owner in Oregon City, was expelled from the Oregon Territory with the enforcement of Black Exclusion Laws.

1851, Spring | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

The initial agreement of the *Kalapuya Treaty* was negotiated but it was never ratified.

The Willamette Valley Treaty Commission drew up 24 treaties that were never ratified by the US government. In these agreements, the tribes agreed to cede their land but not to move off of it, retaining small reserves within their traditional territories. These treaties were not ratified because Congress had revoked the commission's powers in February 1851 (though the commissioners did not learn of this development until months later), and the agreements did not oblige the Kalapuyans to relocate east of the Cascades. LB

1851 | U.S. Indian Appropriation Act

Wikipedia states, *"The 1851 Indian Appropriation Act allocated funds to move Western tribes onto Indian reservations where they would be protected and enclosed by the United States government. According to the federal government at that time, reservations were to be created in order to protect the Indians from increasing numbers of White Americans moving to the West. This act set the precedent for modern-day Indian reservations."*

1852 | Oregon's Territorial Capital

The U.S. Congress names Salem the official capital of the Oregon Territory.

1853 | Smallpox Outbreak in Oregon

Smallpox is a viral infection that infects a person typically through the nose or throat before traveling to the lungs where it then spreads, eventually infecting the lymphatic system. The most notable sign and symptom of smallpox are the large pustules that will appear on an infected person's body. Within these pustules is the smallpox DNA, requiring close human contact to spread. The total incubation period is 12 days at which point should the infected person survive, they will have built up immunity towards the disease.

What knowledge we do have from the series of smallpox outbreaks comes from a series of different sources. The first outbreaks we know of based on reports from traders, missionaries, and colonizers who had encountered signs of smallpox, whether that was through sighting an individual with smallpox scars or other signs of a smallpox epidemic occurring in the area. Lewis and Clark recorded a few sightings of such in their journals:

The Small Pox has destroyed a great number of the natives in this quarter. It prevailed about 4 or 5 yrs Sinc among the Clatspos and distroy'd Several hundreds of them, four of their Chiefs fell a victym to it's ravages. These Clatsops are Deposited in their Canoes on the bay a few miles below us. I think the late ravages of the Small Pox, may well acount for the number of remains of villages which I Saw on my rout to the Kil a mox in Several places AJ

Note: The first reported smallpox outbreak in Oregon was thought to be in 1781, the time at which a large outbreak was happening east of the Rockies. It is hard to know an accurate time frame for this outbreak as recorded observations were recorded after the event by either oral records or from white travelers who noted the smallpox scars on Native Americans they encountered on the west coast. While there is no written record on how many Indigenous people were infected by smallpox, based off of studies of other outbreaks of the disease, historians put the number of deaths at around 30% (the

percentage of population deaths for a population infected by smallpox for the first time) it is thought though that this estimation is on the conservative side.

Smaller outbreaks had been recorded or reported every 10-20 years among the tribes, when a larger part of the population does not have immunity to the disease. While it is unknown how the disease was first spread to the Pacific Northwest, historians have been able to make a couple of educated guesses based off of the information they do know. One such guess is that the disease was first brought to the area from an infected colonizer. Another theory explains that horses being introduced to tribes could be responsible as it allowed more intermixing between tribes, including tribes in the plains where smallpox outbreaks had also occurred

Throughout the years, numerous other smallpox outbreaks were reported among Native tribes. In 1853 the outbreak claimed the lives of about half of the populations near the Columbia area. It was in 1853 that a vaccine had become available in Oregon, but was not distributed to Native populations. AJ



Joel Palmer (1810-1881)

1854, March 25 | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

New Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Joel Palmer negotiated a treaty with the Tualatin Kalapuya tribe. He failed to get the treaty ratified because he did not have the government's permission to negotiate with this tribe. LB

1854 | Oregon's Tribal and Black Heritage

The Oregon Legislature prohibits the sale of "ardent spirits", arms and ammunition to the tribes. The Legislature also bars the testimony of "Negroes, mulattoes, and Indians, or persons one half or more of Indian blood" in proceedings involving a white person.

1855-1856 | Gold Discovered in Southern Oregon

The discovery of gold in Southern Oregon attracts a significant number of settlers and eventually leads to the Rogue River Wars.



Oregon's Kalapuya Communities c. 1850

1855, January 22 | Oregon's Kalapuya Treaty

The *Kalapuya Treaty* of 1855 was signed on January 22, and ratified by the Senate on March 3, 1855. Drafted by Joel Palmer, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, this treaty was negotiated with Kalapuya tribes, the Clackamas Chinook tribes and the Northern Molala tribes. The Kalapuyas, who numbered around 400 people at this time, ceded the entire valley and were promised a permanent reservation, annuities, supplies, educational, vocational, health services, and protection from violence. LB

1855, February 3 | Salem's Irish Heritage

Oregon Spectator

An Irish Mistake

The Salem Gazette tells the following story: – The mistakes into which immigrants are apt to fall, on their arrival here, are not recorded against them as offenses. They are the natural result of a state of things so strange and unaccustomed to them. Last Tuesday morning one of our subscribers lost his paper by means of these misunderstandings; and he was so much amused with the affair, that he related the whole story to us.

His wife had, within a few days, taken into her service a girl, just arrived from Ireland. On Tuesday morning she accosted her mistress with the exclamation — "They've been playing tricks upon us! — There's a boy all about the neighborhood sticking wet paper into everybody's door." Her employer replied, "That is only the newspaper." "Oh, no," she answered, "it could not be the newspaper for it is wet. And I rolled up the one at our door and flung it at the blackguard, as soon as he was out of sight!"

The blunder cost us a fresh paper, but paid us its cost in a good laugh.



Oregon's First State Capitol Building in 1854 drawn by Murray Wade.

1855, December 29 | Oregon's Capitol Building Destroyed

Oregon's Territorial capitol building in Salem, was destroyed by fire.

1856 | Aurora Colony Established

The Aurora Colony, a utopian religious community, is founded in Aurora, Oregon.

1856 | Oregon Tribal Heritage

President James Buchanan establishes the Grand Ronde Reservation west of Salem.

1856, January to March | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

Oregon tribes were forcefully moved to the Grande Ronde Agency (also called Yamhill River Agency) The journey took 33 days and covered 265 miles from Table Rock, in Southern Oregon, to Grand Ronde, west of Salem. There were 325 tribal members and 106 cavalry, which created a procession that stretched for over a mile. Along the way 8 people died and 8 babies were born. LB

"US military personnel appeared in the villages, giving the native people only a few minutes to pack their belongings. Today tribal leaders question the timing of the forced relocations. They ask why the move, 265 miles north, took place in February. They say if the military had waited until the spring, which was just three to five weeks away, the trip would not have been so harsh and deadly. They wonder if the real goal was attrition."

1857 | First Salem City Council Meeting

The first session of Salem City Council meets.



Dred Scott (1799-1858)

1857, March 6 | U.S. Dred Scott vs. Sanford Case

The ruling that “African Americans were not citizens of the United States” was issued by the Supreme Court and delivered by Chief Justice Roger Taney. This ruling declared the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional and said that Congress did not have the authority to prohibit slavery in the territories. Dred Scott vs. Sanford was eventually overturned by both the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. KL

1857, June 30 | Oregon’s Tribal Heritage

The original Grand Ronde Reservation was officially confirmed by Executive Order on June 30th. 61,000 acres, the reservation was located on the headwaters of the South Yamhill River in the Oregon Coast Range. LB

1857, August 17 to September 18 | Oregon’s Constitutional Convention

The 1857 Oregon Constitution bans slavery and also bars African Americans from residing in the state specifying that “*white foreigners who are, or may hereafter become residents of this state shall enjoy the same rights in respect to the possession, enjoyment, and descent of the property as native born...*” In Section 6, Article 2 of this same document it stated that “no Negros, Chinamen, or Mulatto shall have the right to suffrage” this being repealed in 1927.

To amend this constitution in 1857, an elector who offered to vote on the constitution was asked by the judges of the elections certain questions. “Do you vote for slavery in Oregon? Yes or No. Do you vote for

the free Negroes in Oregon? Yes or No. In the poll books shall be columns headed respectably. 'Constitution, yes'. 'Constitution, no.' ... 'Slavery, yes.' 'slavery, no.' KL



The Oregon state flag became official on February 26, 1925.

1859, February 14 | Oregon Statehood

Congress grants Oregon statehood, becoming the only state admitted to the Union with Exclusion Laws in its Constitution. The Oregon Constitution also states that any non-resident of the state from China would be forbidden from owning mining claims and real estate. KL