2025 TALKING HEADSTONES

Molly Sharp, Sacajawea Chapter, DAR, presenting "Charles Palmer Judson Narrative" Union Pioneer Calvary Cemetery. Tumwater, WA

Charles Palmer Judson was born in Connecticut around 1801. As a young man, he headed west and was one of the first settlers of Vermillion, Ohio. He opened the first store there and was postmaster for 25 years.

In 1853, his son Holden and daughter-in-law, Phoebe, traveled by covered wagon to Oregon territory. The following year Charles, his wife Louisa and daughter, Louisa followed. Louisa, his wife, was bed bound when they left Ohio. She suffered from consumption, which is now called tuberculosis. By the time they reached the Rockies, she could stand and when they reached the Cascades was walking.

They first settled in Lewis County where Charles served in the territorial legislature. Then in 1856, he established a donation land claim 320 acres south of what is now the Olympia Airport in Thurston County. The land was bisected by what we know as, 93rd Avenue. Charles established a post office called Beaver in his home. It served 12 families, including the Bush family.

In 1866 he helped establish the Union Cemetery here. After Louisa died, Charles moved to the Nooksack Valley, near Bellingham to live with his son and daughter-in-law. When he died, he returned to join Louisa.

His daughter in law Phoebe was a notable person. She was born in 1831 and died in 1926. She and her husband Holden founded the city of Lynden, WA. Actually, she is frequently referred to as the "Mother of Lynden." Her father, J.W. Goodell, moved west with his family and established the town of Grand Mound, WA. Phoebe kept a journal as she traveled westward. She later wrote a book titled "A Pioneer's Search for an Ideal Home" which I happen to have a copy of right here.

She also founded a school called "Northwest Normal School" which later moved to Bellingham as Western Washington University. Charles' son and Phoebe's husband, Holden, also served in the territorial legislature where he served at least two terms. In 1874, they turned their home in Lynden into a post office and Holden served as postmaster.

TALKING HEADSTONES

"Julieann Rassmuson Debris"

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Tumwater, WA

They traveled out west via the Overland Trail. The Overland Trail was a stagecoach and wagon trail in the American West during the 19th century. While portions of the route had been used by explorers and trappers since the 1820s, the Overland Trail was most heavily used in the 1860s as a route alternative to the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails through central Wyoming.

The Overland Trail was famously used by the Overland Stage Company owned by Ben Holladay to run mail and passengers to Salt Lake City, Utah, via stagecoaches in the early 1860s. Starting from Atchison, Kansas, the trail descended into Colorado before looping back up to southern Wyoming and rejoining the Oregon Trail at Fort Bridger. The stage line operated until 1869 when the completion of the First transcontinental railroad eliminated the need for mail service via stagecoach.

Narrative written by Velma Boyd.