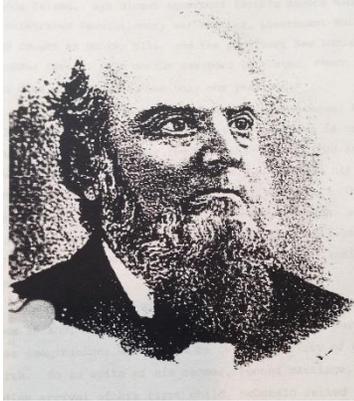




FRIENDS OF HISTORIC
FOREST GROVE

GRAVE MATTERS CEMETERY TOUR 2017

Editor's note: FHFG presented Grave Matters Cemetery Tour on October 7, 2017. During this tour, actors – dressed in attire from the era – portray former Forest Grove area residents. FHFG and the author of this script retains all rights to this script. Written permission is required for using any parts of this script.



Harley S. McDonald, Architect

July 21, 1825 – July 21, 1902

Portrayed by Ron Hansen

Script written by: Mary Jo Morelli and Fletch Grylls

Good afternoon one and all. I hope everyone well.

I am Harley S. McDonald and many years ago I lived and worked in this wonderful new and growing community of Forest Grove.

My life began in Rhode Island, back on July 21st 1825. I, unfortunately, lost my Mother at the young age of 1. Therefore, my Father raised me, mainly in the Providence area. There, I apprenticed under a Finish Carpenter, learning the building trade and picking up some architecture knowledge as well.

When news of the Gold Rush in California arrived on the East coast, I packed my bags and boarded the ship 'Hopewell' for what turned out to be a 197 day voyage around the Cape Horn. I was so entranced by the view of the Cape, I drew a sketch in my diary. We also were very fortunate to have seen a Lunar eclipse on the voyage to California .

I arrived in San Francisco August 9th 1849. The harbor was full of ships and most were empty, for all the sailors had gone off to the gold fields. The city was in a rapid rise of construction, and due to the amount of people, squalor abounded.

After landing , I found out I could make \$16.00 a day building. I enjoyed working with my hands and brains - so I took the job. While in San Francisco some of my accomplishments were in government work for then Lt. William T. Sherman. I made some 'sash doors' from that new recently found red wood. I towed the wood logs across the bay to where I needed the wood. I built the Protestant Church, Bugoine's Bank Building, as well as the first Opera House and Theater.

I did manage to do some prospecting in Downieville on the Yuba River. And, luck be told, took a good amount of gold out in just a few months. It was, of course, a dangerous occupation. Once I was captured by five Indians. They stripped away my clothing and while tying me to a tree and marking my body where they want to shoot their

arrows, one was going through my pockets and found my Bible . I guess that they had experienced missionaries in the past because they crossed themselves and released me! WHEW !!!

Then, I also had to escape a grizzly bear on the way back to San Francisco. Needless to say, when I got safely back, I got on board the 'Tarquena', sailing to Astoria Oregon and arriving there in mid July 1850 .

Then, it was up river to Portland. I arrived to view about a dozen log houses which comprised the City of Portland, surrounded by dense timber. So once again I relied on my skills of the building trade. I kept quite busy building the first pier, the First Congregational Church, a school house, brick yard, several other public buildings and created the first water works. I built many homes as well.

Then, they asked me to build a steamboat. This was very important for the growth of Portland. Her name was the Hoosier and was the first steamboat on the Willamette River. It would steam between Portland and Oregon City.

Portland was growing and seemed to have a future. I went back to Rhode Island to get my beloved wife Betsy and our young son who I had yet to meet.

Upon our return to Portland there was plenty of work! Later we made the decision to move to Forest Grove where I was asked to design the First Congregational Church. We next moved to Salem where I designed many substantial homes and buildings. We stayed for 10 years and another 2 were spent back in Portland.

We finally settled on Forest Grove for its educational benefits. We enrolled the children in the Tualatin Academy and I constructed our family home on the corner of Mulberry and Elm. (Today you would know it as Pacific Avenue and B Street.) Two of the other distinguished homes I was responsible for were for Mr Benjamin Cornelius and Mr James Robb.

All in what I would call the Italiante/Gothic style architect . These were high ceilings, large rooms, distinctive stair railings, and polygonal Bay windows. You may still find my name carved under the handrails for those fine staircases.

I later won the bid for the Chemawa Indian Training School when is was removed from Forest Grove to North of Salem in 1885. This was a tremendous honor but the work and the travel were taxing!

Then it happened, in my prime design and building years, at the mere age of 64, I had a stroke and partial paralysis, thus the end of my building days. We eventually moved in with my son in the Mt Tabor area of Portland. I can honestly say I loved the North West and having been involved in the early years of building and growth throughout the area.

Portland, Forest Grove, Hillsboro, Salem, Brownsville and even parts of Washington State. I am proud of all my accomplishments.

Thank you one and all for your time today.