

Levi Pennington

People

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## Newberg and Herbert Hoover

Levi T. Pennington  
*George Fox University*

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The small city of Newberg (4,000 inside the corporate limits, which have not been changed since 1892, and thickly settled for a mile outside those limits) has a number of features that distinguish it from other cities.

First, it was established by the Friends Church (Quakers). There were a few pioneers in the Chehalem Valley before William Hobson chose this place as the location for the Friends who came from Iowa, Indiana, Illinois and other cities to make Newberg a real town.

Newberg is a "dry" city, with the sale of intoxicating liquor prohibited by its charter. With the exception of a short time in the '30's when beer was legally sold, the town has been "dry" ever since its beginning. Much of the land, owned by Jesse Edwards, called "the father of Newberg", was sold with the provision in every deed that if liquor should ever be made or sold on the property, the property should revert to the Edwards estate.

Newberg is the only Newberg in the United States. There are Portlands in most of the states; there are plenty of Salems in addition to the one where the witches were burned; and there are cities that bear the name of Newburg and Newburgh, but this is the only Newberg in the United States Postal Guide.

Newberg is and always has been a center of culture and education. When the first Quaker settlers came, they set up a school in one of the log cabin homes. It was crude; blocks of wood served as seats for some of the students, but they got some worth while schooling. In 1885 Friends Pacific Academy was established, the first school with instruction "above the common branches" in this part of the state. In 1891 the Academy became Pacific College, retaining its Academy as a preparatory department, which was discontinued in 1930. In 19 the name of the college was changed to George Fox College, in honor of the founder of the Friends Church.

But Newberg's most notable distinction is that it was the home of the boy Herbert Hoover, the first home of which he has clear recollection. Born in West Branch, Iowa, the son of a Quaker woman preacher and the village blacksmith, he lost both his parents while still a small boy. When Friends Pacific Academy was formed, Dr. Henry John Minthorn was chosen as its head. He and his wife had recently lost their only son, and they brought their nephew, usually called Bertie in those days, and gave him the love and care and training that went far to make him the man he later became.

Volumes have been written and many more volumes will be written about this most notable former resident of Newberg. He completed his work in the Academy; his uncle and family moved to Salem and the boy Hoover went with them; he became office boy for the Oregon Land Company which his uncle headed; he was the first student ever enrolled for Stanford University, from which he was one of the first graduates; and his life from then on has been told by many writers, and best of all by himself.

There are relatively few now living in Newberg who were

companions of the boy Hoover during his residence here in the '80's. Those who were remember him as a quiet, studious boy, who listened more than he talked, but who was nevertheless all boy, who loved his games, his fishing, his plunges into the old swimmin' hole, and all the rest that goes to make up a boy's life. His work in the Academy and the chores that he did as the only boy in the home gave him little enough time for play, but he made the most of it when he did have an hour for sport.

The doctor's practice as the first physician in Newberg took him for many a drive over the poor roads of that early day to relieve pain and cure disease in settlers' cabins all over this part of the state. Often Herbert went with his uncle on these drives, and the doctor, reticent himself to a degree, would spend hours on the long miles giving the boy the advantage of the thorough education that the uncle had acquired. Very much of the boy's outlook, broader than that of most boys of his age, came from these long talks with his uncle, much education out of the school room.

One of Herbert's tasks was to keep full of water a half barrel from which the doctor's horses were watered on the return from these trips into the country. Once Herbert failed to have the half barrel full when the doctor returned in the night. He was called from his bed, to fill the receptacle; and then, to make it sure that he would remember next time, he was required to draw a number of buckets of water from the well and pour them into the half barrel and run it over. He remembered next time.

The home in which the Minthorns lived was sold when they moved to Salem, and for a time it was well kept up. But with the passing of the decades it fell into hands of those who neglected it; it had already been remodeled until it bore slight resemblance to what it had been when it was the Minthorn home; and before the second <sup>part</sup> semester of the present century was well started it and the grounds around it were in very sad condition. Pacific College succeeded in purchasing the property, but could get it only with its then occupant holding a life lease on it. After his death the work of restoration was begun, the intention being to make this a national shrine and museum in honor of the boy Herbert Hoover, who had become the man Herbert Hoover, head of Belgian Relief, then National Food Commissioner, then head of the American Relief Administration, then president of the United States.

But the college had its own financial problems, and could not well carry on this additional project with the speed that was desirable; so The Herbert Hoover Foundation was formed, a non-profit corporation headed by Dr. Burt Brown Barker, a boyhood friend of Hoover; the college turned over to this organization the funds already raised for the restoration of the house; something like \$50,000.00 was raised for the project, all but a very small percentage of it from outside of Newberg itself though much was contributed here in the way of labor and material, and the house and grounds were restored to a condition as near what they were in Hoover's day as was possible; the building was furnished with some of the furniture that was in the rooms when the Minthorns lived there, and with other furniture of the same

period; the quarter block to the west of the Minthorn property was purchased and the house on it, built in the same period and of the same style as the Hoover House was made into a home for the caretaker and hostess of the Hoover House; and all was ready for the dedication August 10, 1955, Hoover's 81st birthday.

Before that day arrived, the city park across River street from the Hoover House had been named The Herbert Hoover Park, a fitting name, for that had been the place where the boy Hoover had cared for his uncle's cow and horses, and had cultivated the family garden. The State Highway Commission had named highway US99W from Tigard to Newberg The Herbert Hoover Boulevard. And on the 10th of August of last year the Hoover House, the Herbert Hoover Park and the Herbert Hoover Boulevard were all dedicated in the ceremony attended by thousands, the estimate being 5,000 or perhaps more. And Herbert Hoover made a notable address of the contribution of the pioneers to the progress of Oregon, especially the pioneer physicians, with a special tribute to his uncle, the first of the physicians in this part of the state.

This Hoover House, only a block off Highway US99W, is becoming more and more an easily accessible shrine and museum, and more and more visitors from all parts of the United States and from other countries are visiting it. The bed in which the future president slept is by no means the only article of special interest. Every book written by or about Herbert Hoover, other articles of furniture that were in the house when he lived there, pictures and manuscripts associated with his life here, the books that formed the library of Dr. Minthorn, scores and scores of interesting things associated with Hoover and his brother and sister as well as his uncle's family fill the thoroughly furnished house.

And August 10 of this year, the Oregon Medical Society honored itself and Herbert Hoover and his uncle, Henry John Minthorn, by presenting to the Hoover House a fine portrait of the pioneer physician, in a fine gathering of physicians from all over the state, and with a crowd about that heard the ceremony later by transcription, though there was not room in the house for them. The portrait was unveiled by Mary Minthorn Strench of Santa Barbara, California, a cousin of Hoover who was born in the house while he lived there.

It is especially gratifying to the admirers of the only president of the United States who ever lived here, and who in addition to his other services was the greatest life saver in the world's history, that these honors from his boyhood home have come to him while he is still alive and able to appreciate them.