



Portland, Oregon
Estab. 1882

9002 SW Boones Ferry Road • Portland, OR 97219

Open 8:00am to Sunset

Sauvie Island Settlers Part 2

The Spring 2019 newsletter shared the beginnings of the Reeder family's

story in Portland with the arrival on Sauvie Island in 1853 of Simon Morgan Reed-
er and his wife, Catherine Abel Reeder, after six months on the Oregon Trail.

To continue their story and connect it to the present day Reeders, we
can look to their son James L. Reeder (b. 1851) who grew up on the island,
the eldest of his 9 siblings. In 1878, he married Mary R. and built a house
for them a quarter of a mile from his parents' family residence. James and
Mary lived in this home while he was named postmaster of the Sauvie's
post office in 1883, and while rearing 11 of their own children. In 1894,
their home was destroyed by a flood. With the consent of his parents he re-
built the house, with a promise from them that if he would continue to reside
on and cultivate the land and look after them during their lifetime, the land
would belong to him. James ran the post office until it was closed April 6,
1906 - just a few years after the death of both of his parents (who are both
buried at Greenwood Hills). Simon died in 1902 and Catherine in 1905, but
just weeks before her death that November, Catherine requested on James'
next trip into town that he "secure the services of some person to make out
some papers for her, the nature and character of which she did not indicate
to him." James engaged a Portland lawyer, S.H. Haines, and brought him to
the homestead the next day for Catherine. There, she directed Haines to
make a deed out to son James for his home and the whole Northern half of
the original land claim, and a will for the balance of the property amongst
her remaining children.

A lawsuit was brought to James in 1907 by his brother, FB Reeder and six
other unnamed siblings who were displeased by this arrangement, and made
the suggestion that the deed was the result of undue influence and fraud.
There is "much testimony in the record, concerning the mental condition of
Mrs. Reeder at the time, and many witnesses testified that she was so feeble
in mind and body as to be unable to intelligently and understandingly dis-
pose of her property" while "others expressed, that her mental faculties were
as good as ordinarily possessed by person of her age, and that she was per-
fectly competent."
A court sided with James, and the land remained divided as to Catherine's
wishes.

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Greenwood Hills Cemetery Maintenance Association is a volunteer organization dedicated to maintaining the grounds of Greenwood Hills Cemetery in a manner that respects the dead, honors the living, and preserves a valuable connection with our rich pioneer history. Through responsible stewardship of resources, we strive to maintain a safe and beautiful open space where people can come to remember the past and enjoy the natural world which we hold in sacred trust for the future.

Greenwood Hills Cemetery Maintenance Assoc. • PO Box 80701, Portland, Oregon 97280 • chair@greenwoodhillscemetery.org • www.greenwoodhillscemetery.org • Archivist: /Chair: 503-781-1698 • Facebook: Greenwood Hills Cemetery



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