

NEWS DEPARTMENT

The Passing of Manson F. Backus

On February 15, death brought to a close the career of Manson Franklin Backus, pioneer banker and philanthropist of Seattle. Although prominent in financial and civic affairs, he will be long remembered as a collector of books and pamphlets relating to the Pacific Northwest. His collection of Pacific Northwest Americana was adjudged one of the most valuable libraries in its field. By terms of the will, this collection will become the property of the University of Washington Library. An account of its contents is reserved for a later issue of the *Quarterly*.

Madame Dorion of the Astorians

The Land Office records gave the death of Marie Dorion Toupin as September 3, 1850, but recently the record of her burial has been found in the Catholic Church register at St. Louis, near Gervais, Marion County, Oregon. She died September 5th, 1850, and was buried the following day "dans l'Eglise" which the Reverend Father Charles Kraus explains means within the building. Local tradition is that her body lies "beneath the cross." This seems to indicate that she must have been baptized while young, as her christian name, Marie, suggests, and probably married by some priest to Pierre Dorion, Jr. "Madame Iowa," as she was called, must have been highly esteemed since not even Dr. McLoughlin was buried within a church building. She is remembered as having been "spare built," about five feet six inches tall and weighing about 155 pounds. A brief biographical sketch will be found in the *Washinton Historical Quarterly*, Volume 24, July, 1933, pages 228-29, by J. Neilson Barry. The church record was found by M. Leona Nichols, of Portland, and made known by Attorney Robert J. Hendricks of Salem. Professor Cleveland S. Simpkins, University of Tennessee, Memphis, Tenn., is a descendant. The Land Office records show that her husband, John Toupin, began farming in the Willamette valley, near Salem, March 27, 1841.

The above item was furnished by Mr. J. Neilson Barry, of Portland, who is also the author of a biography of Madame Dorion in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Volume XXX, pages 272-278. That same publication for March, 1935, carries an article by T. C.