

## 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*.

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### *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.

Elliott entitled "The Grave of Madame Dorion." It enlarges upon the recent discovery of the church record by M. Leona Nichols and suggests that the women of Oregon should erect a statue of Madame Dorion equal to that in Portland now honoring the memory of Sacajawea.

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*Pioneer Exhibit*

The Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington (prior to 1870) made an unusually fine exhibit of relics and records of pioneers in Frederick & Nelson's Auditorium, Seattle, on February 16-23, 1935. The Chairman of the Committee, Mrs. L. O. Graves, has expressed gratitude for the cordial cooperation received, especially from Frederick & Nelson and from Mr. W. P. Bonney, Secretary of the Washington State Historical Society, and Mr. Charles W. Smith, Librarian of the University of Washington.

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*Sight Recovered*

Don Donaldson, on the last cover-page of *The Readers' Digest* for April, 1935, gives a rather remarkable record of blindness while a student in the University of Washington and his recovery through surgery in 1932.

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*Adult Education*

The State of Washington Department of Education, in the Division of Adult Education, has Dr. Frederick M. Lash as Supervisor of the Second District, embracing King, Kitsap, Clallam and Jefferson counties. It was surprising to learn from him that he has 15,000 enrolled for such work.

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*Colonel Redington Passes*

Col. J. W. Redington, 75, died at the Soldiers' Home in California on March 23. He served as a scout in the Nez Perce Indian War of 1877, and in other campaigns in the Northwest. He founded the *Gazette* in Heppner, Oregon, and later had newspaper experience in Puyallup, Tacoma, Portland and Los Angeles. He kept up a jolly correspondence with pioneer friends for years in spite of his failing health. Probably his best known survivor is his daughter, Bernice Redington ("Prudence Penny"), home economics editor of the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*.