

ROGUE VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

3405 South Pacific Highway
 Medford, Oregon
 97501

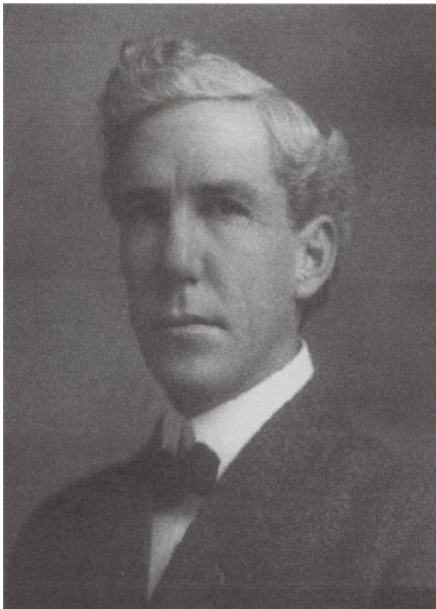
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Editor's Note:

The Rogue Valley Genealogical Society is pleased to present in this issue the second in a series of research success stories from our membership. The stories in this issue were shared as presentations at a the September 2014 general meeting. More success stories will be included in future issues.

WHO IN THE WORLD IS E.B. PICKEL?

by Barbara Northup, MSW



That is the question I asked myself when I volunteered to do research on a Southern Oregon pioneer for the RVGS library's Pioneer File Collection. When I agreed to do the research, I was handed a file folder that contained only one document. A copy of a May 11, 1912, *Medford Mail Tribune* clipping containing a quote attributed to a Dr. E.B. Pickel.

From this one newspaper article, I was able to learn that E.B. Pickel was a prominent citizen in Medford in 1912 and that he was a doctor. Despite being a native Southern Oregonian, I had never heard of E.B. Pickel. So just who was he?

With little else to go on but a name and a place, I began my research with the basic google search, "E.B. Pickel+Medford, Oregon." From there, Dr. E.B. Pickel came to life. Let me introduce to you to Dr. Elijah Barton Pickel (1861-1932).

Dr. Pickel was born in Sweetwater, Monroe Co., Tennessee, to French and Maryann Hale (Matheny) Pickel on 17 Sep 1861. In 1885 he married Mattie E. Delashmit in Philadelphia, Tennessee. He received his degree in medicine at the University of Louisville in Kentucky on March 1, 1888. He earned a second medical degree at the Illinois College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1894.

By May or June 1888, Dr. Pickel had arrived in Medford to begin his medical career. However, his life in the Rogue Valley included much, much more than just doctoring.

The following are just a few of his accomplishments in the Rogue Valley:

- Elected to Medford City Council, 1892
- Installed the first private telephone line, 1893
- Purchased the West Main property for the Pickel Rental House, 1900

- Planted the 401 Orchard and Brookhurst Orchard, 1900
- Purchased the first X-ray Machine, 1900
- One of the original Directors of the Medford Library Association, 1903
- Elected Mayor of Medford, 1904-1905
- Member & President of the Oregon State Board of Health, 1905-1907
- Owned the first automobile in Medford (according to local folklore), 1910
- Member of Board of Directors for the Medford Hotel, 1911
- Member of Fundraising Committee for Sacred Heart Hospital, dedicated in 1912
- One of several surgeons who operated on Sheriff August Singler, 1913
- Health Officer during influenza outbreak, 1918
- Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, 1920

This is just a broad overview of Dr. Pickel's accomplishments and contributions to the Rogue Valley; Dr. Pickel was involved in many other local community, church, and fraternal organizations. He bought and sold many plots of land, including residential lots within the Medford city limits. The two most noteworthy homes he owned were his original home on West Main Street next to the Medford Hotel (which was torn down in the 1930s) and the Pickel Rental Home, still on West Main Street in Medford.

Dr. Elijah Barton Pickel died 1 Mar 1932 at the age of 70. He was survived by his wife. They had no children of their own; however, their nephew was listed as an adopted son in the 1920 census.

In 1939 a Magnolia tree was placed in the courtyard of the Jackson County Courthouse in his honor. The tree was transplanted from their former home on West Main St. A plaque placed under the tree read, "Dedicated to Dr. E. Barton Pickel, the Beloved Physician, 1861-1932." The tree remains in the courthouse courtyard today.

What made this research project such a pleasure is that many of the resources used to reconstruct E.B. Pickel's life were available locally. Documents and photos were located at the RVGS library, the Southern Oregon Historical Society, the Jackson County Public Library—Local History Section, and the Jackson County Clerk's Office.

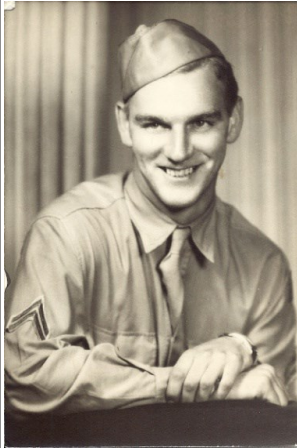
Two important resources found online were Ben Truwe's article about Dr. Pickel on his website, *Southern Oregon History, Revised*, <http://id.mind.net/~truwe/tina/s.o.history.html> and the State of Oregon Inventory of Historical Properties website that described the history of the Pickel Rental House <http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/SHPO/Pages/index.aspx>.

This research project has been an excellent lesson in Southern Oregon history, and Dr. Elijah Barton Pickel was indeed a prominent pioneer worthy of recognition. I am fortunate to have had this opportunity to learn about one of our own pioneers.



THE MILITARY STORY OF MY DAD, CLIFFORD C. IVERSON

by Barbara Hull



Clifford C. Iverson, 1942



*Mr. and Mrs. Clifford C. Iverson,
December 16, 1943*



Clifford C. Iverson, 2006



Camp White, 1942




Clifford C. Iverson, Squad Leader of 13 soldiers in Italy

Staff Sergeant Clifford C. Iverson

Squad Leader 745 in charge of rifle squad. Responsible for operation of squad in scouting and patrol duties. Company L, 3rd Battalion, 362nd Regiment, 91st Infantry Division

The following medals and ribbons were awarded to him: Combat Infantry Badge, American Theater Ribbon, European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon w/ 3 Bronze Battle Stars, World War 2 Victory Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star GO 41 HQ Infantry Division—June 9, 1945, 1 Service Stripe, 2 Overseas Service Bars, Lapel Button issued for inactive service.

He fought in the following battles: Rome-Arno, North Apennines, and Po Valley.



Clifford Charles Iverson was drafted into the Army on 11 September 1942, at Camp Custer, Battle Creek, Michigan. After basic training he was sent to White City, Oregon, in November of 1942 and served under the 91st Division. His training period covered 39 weeks of basic training, and then 13 weeks of unit training in platoon and company formations. The last 13 weeks devoted to the tactics of the Battalion and Regiment, were climaxed by maneuvers involving the whole Division held in the vicinity of Camp White. There was also training in the assault of a fortified area. It was while stationed at Camp White that he met his future wife, Veneta Breazeale.

After Camp White, he went to Bend, Oregon, for training in 10,000 square miles of terrain ranging from hot dusty desert to cold mountainous country. The extremes of heat and cold, the excessive dust, snows and rain, and the difficult terrain tested the endurance and ingenuity of every officer and enlisted man. The exercises accomplished their purposes, and the three Divisions that participated (the 91st, the 96th and the 104th Divisions) emerged as hard, well-trained fighting units ready to take their place in theaters of combat.

From Bend, the Division moved to Camp Adair near Albany, Oregon. Clifford and Veneta were married in 1943 in Ashland, Oregon, while he was stationed at Camp Adair. At Camp Adair, the lessons learned in maneuvers were thoroughly studied, and every effort was made to polish rough edges wherever they appeared, in anticipation of an early alert for movement overseas. It was not a long wait; the alert came on 20 January 1944.

In May 1944, Clifford C. Iverson, along with thousands of soldiers, was shipped to North Africa. The 91st Division was immediately launched on an intensive training program that was organized to simulate every possible phase of battle. On 31 May they headed for Italy. The 362nd Combat Team, lead by the 3rd Battalion, moved against the enemy's defenses on the Arzew shore, cut the road leading to a city, and struck 1000 yards inland to its first objective. The city was captured.

Then it was on to capture and secure Arno. The 3rd Battalion, 362nd Infantry, which Clifford C. Iverson helped lead, replaced the 1st Battalion on the front lines. The advance was slow, not because of enemy resistance, which was slight, but because of the terrain, which was very rugged. One company from each Battalion outposted the line, and patrols were sent to the Arno River. After seven and a half days, the fighting Division had accomplished its mission.

During the month of September, the 91st Division fought its most brilliant campaign, in which it smashed the most formidable defensive positions in Italy: the Gothic Line. The Division advanced through elaborately constructed fortifications and over mountainous terrain (made even more hazardous by rain and fog) with unflinching determination and unfailing courage. According to one infantryman, the climactic days were a "lifetime of mud, rain, sweat, strain, fear, courage, and prayers." But the brilliant leadership and magnificent courage of the 91st Division cracked the Gothic Line and established itself as one of the great fighting Divisions of World War II.

The next battle was the Futa Pass. The 362nd Infantry was advancing up Highway 65 toward M. Calvi and Futa Pass. The fighting was very bitter and the advance painfully slow. In the meantime the 3rd Battalion, 362nd Infantry, Clifford C. Iverson's group of men, which had been operating almost alone, with the closest unit more than 1,000 yards away, was battling north along Highway 65. Despite a warning by General Livesay that they were not to try "to win the war by themselves," they were trying to do exactly that. On the morning of 16 September, the Battalion came against a spectacular anti-tank ditch over a mile long and covered by interlocking fields of machine gun fire. Covering the highway was an 88mm Tiger tank gun and turret mounted in a concrete emplacement, as well as other concrete pillboxes and dugouts commanding the approaches to the pass. It took all they had, but they captured the Futa Pass.

After several other intense battles and the loss of many lives, Clifford C. Iverson came home a hero! He received several ribbons and medals for his bravery including the Bronze Star. When he arrived home, his Dad asked him, "How was it son?" My Dad's response was "like hell, and I never want to talk about it again," and he never really did.

I do recall that once, I was about 9, my Dad, brother and I played war one night in the hallway of our house and the Futa Pass battle was the one we pretended to be in. I remember so vividly how Dad drew out our plans and strategies to overtake the enemy. We were armed with cardboard guns and ammunition as we crawled down the hallway to the open field (our living room) and captured the enemy. This was the only time I ever remember my Dad talking about the war.

During his time overseas, Dad's Mom wrote to him every day without fail and saved his letters, which I now have. His wife, my mother, Veneta Breazeale, also wrote, and the best news he said he ever received was that he was going to be a father. (My brother Jerry was born on December 8, 1944.) Dad looked forward to all of the letters, treasuring them and re-reading them, not knowing for sure if he would ever come home.

I would like to share with you some excerpts from his letters:

17 August 1944: "...how did you like the news about us landing in southern France? They couldn't list all the names of the towns taken, because they were moving too fast and the "Jerrys" were running faster the other way...."

30 August 1944: "...as you know by now I'm out of the hospital and still taking it easy." (Dad was injured while saving one of his soldier's lives. The soldier lifted his head to see what was going on. Dad shoved him down while throwing a grenade and when his arm came down on the soldier's head, Dad's hand was pierced by the soldier's bayonet.)

9 October 1944: "...Mom, you said to give it to them. Well I'll do my best, but I sure hope this war ends soon. I've seen enough of it and I know a lot of other fellows feel the same way...."

12 December 1944: "...No Mom your letters to me are not censored. My letters are the only ones that are censored so you can write whatever you want...."

17 December 1944: "...Mom you said you know what I'm going through. Well I don't think anyone knows it but me. You and Dad didn't have a war that took you away from each other, but Veneta and I have...."

11 February 1945: "...I received a letter from you with Jerry's picture, he sure is cute. You said you would love to see Jerry, well you don't know how much I want to see him, but that day will come and I just hope it's not too far away...."

9 March 1945: "...Well Jerry is three months old now and it won't be long and I'll have my eleven months overseas in. The Division had started to give out furloughs, but it will be a long time before I ever get one. I sure would like to get one...."

1 April 1945: "...Today is Easter Sunday and we had church this morning and I went. I also went to Good Friday. Well we had ham for dinner, but it wasn't like the ham I got when I was home...."

21 May 1945: "...Mom you said you thought I was being shipped someplace else. Well I'm still in Italy. I see Van drowned in the Rhine River. It was tough to get the news, so near the end of the war over here. When the war ended over here all of us knew we wouldn't all be going home...."

14 July 1945: "...I'm in good health but a little lonesome for Veneta and Jerry and home. Mom and Dad it's no fun being away from your wife and child. I know it's no fun for Veneta either, but someday I'll be coming home and then and only then will I be happy again...."

My Dad always ended his letters with “I wish this war would get over soon” and signed them “To the best Mom and Dad in the whole world, your loving Son, Cliff.”

Dad was discharged from the Army on 6 November 1945 at Camp Grant, Illinois.

My Mom and brother took the train back to Detroit, Michigan, to meet him and begin their life together. I was born Barbara Iverson on 8 August 1946, and shortly after that we moved out to Oregon and have been here ever since. Our first home was what they called the “Project Housing” for returning soldiers and their families. It was located on West Jackson Street where Columbus intersects.

Most of my information has come from the following seven resources:

1. Letters Dad sent to his Mom during the war
2. Camp White Oregon book “The 91st”
3. 91st Division Book
4. Camp Adair Book
5. Rome Arno Book
6. North Apennines Book
7. Po Valley Book

Special thanks to Master Sergeant Roland Hall, Historian of the 91st Division, for all the information he has supplied that helped me in the making of my book in memory of my Dad, Clifford C. Iverson.

A CRACK IN MY BRICK WALL

by Chuck Carter

(edited by Anne Billeter)



Jared George Peck, son of George Washington Peck; the author's mother-in-law, Mary Neomi Peck Warner, and her brother George Peck.

My wife's side of the family had a “so I've been told story” and it goes like this—

A family Bible and a baby about 18 months old were found in a travel trunk after an Indian raid on a wagon train in Wisconsin in 1854. The baby was adopted by the Peck family. JCGL librarian Kathy Edwards found on the internet a lady who was researching someone I was also searching for. Her email message was nearly 5 years old, but her surname was Peck. We emailed and found that she was a cousin. Neither she nor my wife had known about the other. In September 2014, my wife's 77-year-old oldest sister said the “boys” were going elk hunting in Wyoming where she lives. My wife wanted to see her sister one more time, but it's 1000 miles one way and I didn't want to go. My wife used the Genealogy ploy on me: the Peck family homestead was in Idaho, and we could stop on the way back home. I said “OK” and off we

went. When we arrived at the Oregon-Idaho border, it started storming, and it kept storming through Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming.

I had copies of old family pictures, mostly with no names, but my sister-in-law Mary knew who they were. One was the

adopted child of my brick wall. I didn't stay in Elk Camp at 9,000 feet, but the oldest nephew shot a 5-by-7 bull elk on opening day.

Now on to Idaho. We headed for Crichton, which is a ghost town in the Camas Valley north of Fairfield, Idaho. After 45 miles of sagebrush and desert land, we came to the top of a long hill and saw one big green valley (pictured at right).

I pulled over and took pictures. I could see why the pioneers of 1860 stayed and homesteaded. Most land was free from the government at that time. We met up with my wife Evie's cousin and saw the old homestead (trio of pictures below left), most of which was still there.



The house (pictured at right) burned down and was rebuilt in 1920.



Evie's cousin had a copy of the 1854 adoption papers from Wisconsin. In the papers, the child was named Gaylord Alanson, with no last name. The papers gave the birth date as 1852 and birthplace as Wisconsin. They also included the mother's full name, Jane C.



Jones, but no father. They also named the adopting parents, Jared George Peck and Anna F. Peck. (The Pecks named the child George Washington Peck.) The paper was handwritten and needed to be transcribed. I got lucky and Anne Billeter did this part for me. (Thank you, Anne!)



Because of the missing father and the pictures of the family who look so much like Evie's great-great-grandfather George Washington Peck, I feel like I only put a crack in my brick wall. The cousin and I now believe that the Indian raid was only a story. I've only found sporadic evidence for the birth mother. So it looks like I've only cracked the brick wall so far.

It also has got me started again! When we were at the family plot in the Mountain View cemetery in Fairfield, two men were putting a brass marker on George Washington Peck's grave. This was from when he was an Indian fighter and scout for the Army during the Bannock Indian War around Boise, Idaho.

It was good to get back to Oregon after driving at 70 and 80 mph on the freeways of Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming.



STRANGERS IN THE BOX

By Pam Harazim

Come, look with me inside this drawer,
In this box I've often seen,
At the pictures, black and white.
Faces proud, still, serene.

I wish I knew the people,
These strangers in the box.
Their names and all their memories
Are lost among my socks.

I wonder what their lives were like,
How did they spend their days?
What about their special times?
I'll never know their ways.

If only someone had taken time
To tell who, what, where, or when,
These faces of my heritage
Would come to life again.

Could this become the fate
Of the pictures we take today?
The faces and the memories
Someday to be tossed away?

Make time to save your stories,
Seize the opportunity when it knocks,
Or someday you and yours could be
The strangers in the box.

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