

Albert W. Rahles

Pioneer of 1852

compiled by Stephenie Flora  
oregonpioneers.com

Albert W. Rahles

b. c1840 Germany

d. 13 May 1889 at sea

buried Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Portland, Multnomah Co, OR

m. 01 Jan 1870

Bridget McGraw

b. 1843 Scotland

d. Nov 1912 Portland, Multnomah Co, OR

buried Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Portland, Multnomah Co, OR

TOPA: 1887 p.12; Al Rahles, emigrant of 1852

1860: Colville Valley, Spokane, WA, August 1860; Albert Rahles, 28, b. Russia; ferryman; \$10,000; James McChessney, 26, Teamster, b. Ireland

1870: Portland, Multnomah Co, OR; Albert Rawles, 30, steamer steward, \$0 \$500, b. Baden; Bridget, 27, keeping house, b. Scotland; Frank, 6, b. Idaho Terr (son from previous marriage?, nephew??)

1880: District 99, Portland, Multnomah Co, OR; Albert Rawles, 46, steamboat steward, Germany Germany Germany; Delia, 28, wife, keeping house, Scotland Scotland Scotland; Victor, 8, b. OR; Emma, 7, b. OR; Mary, 6, b. OR; Albert, 3, b. OR; Mary Kelley, 40, servant, b. NY

Oregon Death Index: Victor A. Rahles d 01 Apr 1915 Multnomah Co (d. OSH); Albert W. Rahles d. 30 Sep 1955 Multnomah Co (wife Belle); Edward Rahles, d. 23 Aug 1939 Portland

Oregon State Archives: guardianship for children 1891

### **Mrs. B. Rahles Is Dead.**

Mrs. B. Rahles, aged 67, and widow of the late Albert W. Rahles, died yesterday at the family residence, 131 North Tenth street. She is survived by the following children: Mrs. J. A. Epping, of Hood River; Mrs. Austen Osburn, of Astoria; Miss Maud Rahles, Messrs. Albert, Edward and Victor Rahles, of Portland

[Oregonian, Portland, OR, November 11, 1912 p4]

### **CARD OF THANKS.**

We wish to return our sincere thanks for the thoughtful kindness shown us in the loss of our dear mother.

MRS. J. A. EPPING.  
MRS. AUSTIN OSBURN,  
MR. VICTOR RAHLES.  
MR. ALBERT W. RAHLES.  
MR. EDWARD RAHLES.  
MISS MAUD RAHLES. \*\*

[Oregonian, Portland, OR, Sunday November 17, 1912 Sec III p7]

Children of Albert Rahles:

1. Victor Albert Rahles

b. 1870 OR

d. 01 Apr 1915 Multnomah Co, OR

buried Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Portland, Multnomah Co, OR

**RAHLES**—On April 1, Victor Albert Rahles, aged 44 years 6 months 4 days. Funeral from Holman's funeral parlors at 10:15 A. M. today (Saturday), thence to the Cathedral, Fifteenth and Davis streets, where services will be held at 10:30 A. M. Friends invited. Interment St. Mary's Cemetery. Seattle and Everett papers please copy.

[Oregonian, Portland, OR, Saturday April 3, 1915 p. 14]

2. Emma Rahles
  - b. 1873 OR
  - d.
  - m. J.A. Epping1919 living in Hood River, OR per Elise Rahles Devlin obit (sister of Albert)
  
3. Mary Rahles
  - b. 1874 OR
  - d.
  - m. Austin Osburn1919 living in Hood River, OR per Elise Rahles Devlin obit (sister of Albert)
  
4. Albert William Rahles
  - b. 1877 OR
  - d. 30 Sep 1955 Multnomah Co, OR
  - m. Miss Dickey
  
5. Maud Jane Rahles
  - b. 1881 Portland, Multnomah Co, OR
  - d. May 1967 Seaside, OR

**Later, in interviewing Jim Martell, a Warner Brothers casting director for eight years, I asked him when the 475 extras being used in the movie would be needed, and when they would be notified.**

He replied that it was hoped those who had signed up would be called July 28 for costume fittings, although 60 extras would be needed several days fore this date.

Enough women and children have been signed up for the movie's needs, including three generations of the E. T. Sturgeon family. . . Mrs. Sturgeon, her daughter Mrs. David Gowans, and grandchildren. An 84-year-old charmer, Auntie Maudie Rahles, was disappointed to hear the company was providing costumes, as she had unearthed an amazing black taffeta and jet beaded garment called a "Dolman."

This finely executed relic had belonged to her mother, Mrs. Albert Rahles, and Auntie Maudie had hopefully planned to wear it in the old-time film. My hostess, Mitzie and her daughter Carol also will be waiting by the telephone next Monday or Tuesday.

[Oregonian, Portland, OR, Tuesday July 21, 1964 p. 17]

## **MAUD JANE RAHLES**

**SEASIDE** (Special) — requiem Mass for Maud Jane Rahles will be Monday, May 15, at 11 a.m. in Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church in Seaside. She died Thursday in an Astoria convalescent home.

Miss Rahles was born in Portland in 1881. She had liv-

ed in Portland, Hood River and Astoria before she moved to Seaside in 1943. She was a resident of Gearhart at the time of her death.

She was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Rahles, pioneer Portlanders connected with early day shipping, and was a niece of John A. and Elise Rahles Devlin, who moved to Astoria in the 1860s and established one of the early canneries there.

Survivors include six nieces and nephews.

Recitation of the Rosary will be in Hughes-Ransom Chapel in Seaside at 8 p.m. Sunday, May 14.

[Oregonian, Portland, OR Saturday May 13, 1967 p. 19]

6. Edward Rahles

b.

d.

1919 living in Hood River, OR per Elise Rahles Devlin obit (sister of Albert)

Correspondence:

**From:** [Rahlie Goodell](#)

**Sent:** Friday, September 27, 2013 9:23 PM

**To:** [SLFlora47@msn.com](mailto:SLFlora47@msn.com)

**Subject:** Emigrants to Oregon in 1852--Albert Rahles

Dear Stephenie, It has been 6 years since I was last in contact with you.

Thank you very much for including my great grandfather Albert Rahles on your list of EMIGRANTS TO OREGON IN 1852. Due to my husband having a serious stroke, I haven't looked at your website since then and was very excited to see what you have done with it.

The information you included is not quite correct, however, as some information in the 1880 Census is incorrect. Albert was never married to "Delia". Albert married [Bridget McGraw](#) on 1/1/1870 in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland, Oregon. I believe that "Delia" was a house maid, and as both Albert and Bridget were emigrants, I can understand how the mistake was made. I have copies of their actual marriage records and know that my information is correct.

Also, MY email address has changed and as I am listed as the "Rahles Researcher," I am wondering if you could change it. My address is now: [rahlie.goodell@gmail.com](mailto:rahlie.goodell@gmail.com) I would be VERY pleased if I were to get a response with information or a query on the Rahles Family.

Thank you very much, Stephenie. Your website is wonderful. It has so much information!

Rahles Goodell

Wikipedia:

The steamship *Alaskan* operated from 1884 to 1889 on the [Columbia River](#) and [Puget Sound](#). *Alaskan* and her near-sistership *Olympian* were known as “[Henry Villard](#)’s White Elephants.” There were a number of vessels named *Alaska* and *Alaskan*, this large side-wheel steamboat should not be confused with them.

*Alaskan* was built in 1883 in [Chester, Pennsylvania](#). She was a [sidewheeler](#) driven by a single cylinder vertical condensing walking-beam [steam engine](#), which gave her high speed.<sup>[3]</sup> Her iron hull was 276 feet (84 m) long, and she was rated at 1718 tons. She was built primarily for service on Puget Sound.

In 1884, *Alaskan* was brought to the Pacific Northwest through the [Strait of Magellan](#), around South America. *Alaskan* and *Olympian* were built to designs popular and successful on [Chesapeake Bay](#). When she arrived in the [Pacific Northwest](#) this design proved unsuited for the conditions, and the ship became a steady money loser.<sup>[4]</sup> Timmen, one of the leading marine historians of the Pacific Northwest, states of [Henry Villard](#) that “[t]his financial genius, who once monopolized the Northwest’s rail and water transportation, must have suffered a lapse of common sense when he ordered the pair constructed in Delaware.”

Villard's company, the [Oregon Railway and Navigation Company](#) first placed *Alaskan* in service on the [Columbia River](#), where because of her huge size, she could only operate on the deeper

water from [Portland](#) to [Astoria](#). Her first set of officers included master Capt. James W. Troup (1856–1932), pilot Archie Pease, and engineer Thomas Smith. *Alaskan*'s chief rival on this route was U.B. Scott's *Telephone*, supposedly then the fastest steamboat in the world. Occasionally the highly-skilled Troup and Pease were able to outrun *Telephone*, then under the command of the equally-skilled river veterans Capt. William H. Whitcomb (1851–1924) and chief engineer Newton Scott. Both *Alaskan* and *Olympian* proved too expensive to operate on the Columbia River. The main problem was that they consumed huge quantities of expensive coal.



*Alaskan* at dock of Northern Pacific Railway at [Tacoma, W.T.](#) circa 1880



*Alaskan* moored at [Seattle](#)

In 1888, unable to make a profit on the Columbia, [O.R. & N](#) transferred *Alaskan* to [Puget Sound](#) where together with *Olympian* she ran from [Tacoma](#), [Seattle](#), and [Port Townsend](#) to [Victoria](#) and back. She served on this route until 1889.

In 1889, *Alaskan* needed underwater work and maintenance on her hull. However there were no [drydocks](#) in the Pacific Northwest. Instead there were only wooden “gridirons”, enormous frames of wood weighted down with rocks placed on a beach or mudflat. When work was needed below the waterline of a vessel, the procedure was simply to float the ship over the gridiron, wait for the tide to run out, and work on the vessel as fast as possible before the tide came back in. No gridiron in the Pacific Northwest was big enough to handle *Alaskan*, so the decision was made to run her down to [San Francisco](#).

*Alaskan* left Puget Sound, sailing around the [Olympic Peninsula](#), then up the Columbia and [Willamette](#) rivers to [Portland](#). With Capt. R.E. Howes in command, *Alaskan* then ran back down the Columbia, crossed over the Columbia Bar at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 11, 1889, then turned south for San Francisco at 9 knots (17 km/h). She ran about 18 miles (29 km) off the coast [in ballast](#)—carrying no freight or passengers though many had applied—with 34 persons on board.<sup>[1]</sup> She ran all night, passing the [Yaquina Head Lighthouse](#) at 11:00 p.m. running 14 miles (23 km) off shore. Weather conditions were good: light wind and rain showers, and the barometer holding steady.

By Sunday morning, the wind and wave height had increased. The ship was laboring heavily through the rolling waves 18 miles (29 km) offshore at

[43°30'N 124°36'W](#)[43.5°N 124.6°W](#). *Alaskan* had never been intended to run as an ocean vessel, and she had been worn out by hard driving on the Columbia River. By 3:00 p.m. off [Cape Blanco](#) she was in serious trouble as the sidewheels moved at "dead slow" and [green water](#) came in over the bow. The ship could not maintain direction, as a wave would lift one side and its paddle out of the water, then another, so that little or no forward progress could be made.



painting depicting sinking of *Alaskan*

The aftercabin worked loose with the securing bolts pulled through the planking. Second Officer Weeks and the crew tried to shove blankets and ticking into the holes to stop the leaks, but the vessel still kept shipping additional tons of water. The ship continued to gradually come apart under the stress. Her iron hull was not breached but her wooden upper works were being torn away by waves.

By 6:00 p.m. her condition became irretrievable when the port side paddle box tore away, leaving numerous holes in the hull. The water rose in the hold faster than the pumps could work. By midnight, the boiler fire was extinguished and *Alaskan* lost all power save for an emergency sail rigged earlier to keep her steadier in the wind.

Captain Howes ordered the ship's boats to be launched and towed behind the vessel on a line. Three of the four boats were successfully launched this way, and most of the crew were successfully evacuated, save only five men: Captain Howes, the chief engineer, the second mate, steward Al Rahles, and seaman Denny. As the boats were being launched, the crew saw a light from another ship, and desperately launched two distress rockets to ask for assistance. As the evacuation was going on, a wave broke over the deck and sucked [Quartermaster](#) (the seaman who actually steers the ship) Shielderup into the now-exposed side wheel where he was horribly mangled. At about 1:00 a.m. on Monday morning, the ship seemed to be going down so they cut the line to the boats. There was then no way off the *Alaskan* for the five men left on board.

The ship stayed afloat for about another hour and a half. Captain Howes and chief engineer Swain ended up clinging to a fragment of the deck. The pilot house floated by, with three men hanging on to it. Against the captain's advice, the chief struck out swimming for them, but never made it and was not seen again.

The tug *Vigilant*, moving slowly because of her tow—a manned barge—had seen the *Alaskan's* distress rockets, and arrived at the scene Monday evening, when she picked up the three men

from the pilot house, and one living man and one dead from a life raft. *Vigilant* found Captain Howes still hanging on to the deck fragment, which had been gradually getting smaller as seas tore off pieces. He was taken on board after 33 hours in the water. *Vigilant* picked up the men from the first boat, with the ship's mate on board. A second boat reached shore, but the third boat was never seen again. Quartermaster Shieldrup was picked up alive, his leg nearly severed. He died a short while later and was buried at sea. Altogether 30 people were lost. The ship was insured for \$200,000. Captain Howes and his remaining crew were later returned Astoria by the coastal passenger liner [Columbia](#), also operated by O.R. & N.<sup>1</sup>

## References

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