

George Washington Bush

Pioneer of 1844

compiled by Stephenie Flora
oregonpioneers.com



George Washington Bush

b. 1790 VA/PA

d. 05 Apr 1863 Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

m. 04 Jul 1830/31/32 Clay Co, MO [shown together in the 1830 census]

Isabella James

b. 1811 TN

d. 12 Sep 1866 Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

d/o Baptist minister

There have been some assertions that he was a cook for the fur traders at Astoria and had spent some time in the NW prior to his emigration. I personally do not feel that this is likely the same person but I am interested in documentation to the contrary.

1815: fought in the war of 1812 at the January 8, 1815 Battle of New Orleans under Andrew Jackson

1830: Clay Co, MO; George Bush, 1 white male 30-40; 1 white female 20-30

1831-32 reportedly fought and was wounded in the Black Hawk Indian War

1840: Jefferson, Buchanan Co, MO, George Bush, 4 free colored males -10; 1 free colored males 24-35; 1 free colored males 35-50; 1 white female 30-40

1844: In June 1844, just prior to his arrival, the Oregon Provisional government adopted the Black Exclusion Law making it illegal for blacks to settle in Oregon. Upon arrival, finding that he could not settle in what was currently considered the Oregon Territory he asked, and received permission from the HBC's Dr. John McLoughlin to settle north of the Columbia. Turning their back on the Oregon Territory, many of his friends accompanied him and settled what is now known as Tumwater, WA.

1850: Lewis Co, Oregon Territory, November 25, 1850; George Bush, 56, black, farmer, \$3000, VA; Isabella, 43, TN; Talbert, 17, m, MO; Rail B., 14, m, MO; Henry S., 11, m, MO; January J., 8, m, MO; Louis S., 4, m, OT

In March 1854, 55 settlers in the new Washington Territory petitioned the US Congress to exempt Bush from the act prohibiting him from owning property as stipulated in the Donation Land Act which stipulated that only whites and American half breed Indians were eligible to own land.

1860: Olympia PO, Thurston Co, WA, June 26, 1860; Geo. Bush, 70, black, farmer, \$5500 \$2725, PA; Isabella, 49, white, TN; Tolbert, 24, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; Raby, 22, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; Sanford, 19, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; A.J., 16, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; Lewis, 13, mulatto, farm laborer, WT; James Town/Farm, 28, white, laborer, France

. "It is well established that his mother was an Irish maid in the household of a merchant named Stevenson in Philadelphia during the later 18th century. Racially speaking, it is generally concluded that his father, Matthew Bush was black, having been born in India and brought to the United States by Stevenson sometime before 1776. There he married the Irish maid, and George was their only offspring." ["George Bush" written by Darrell Millner for the Washington Historical Society in their publication, Columbia p.14-19 in the Winter 1994/95 edition takes a closer look at George Washington Bush, his life, and his contribution to the settling of the Tumwater, Washington area]

WT44: p.42,176; was black man who had been a cook for the fur trappers at Astoria; was with 1844 emigrants

OHSQ: Vol VI p.148; enticed by Michael T. Simmons to settle at Puget Sound near Tumwater, WA; the Oregon Provisional government had enacted stringent laws against black and mulattoes and they were not allowed to remain in the country for fear of punishment; George W. Bush was a mulatto with a white wife; he was possessed of more means than any other of his party and had been very generous in helping other immigrants; in turn, they elected to stand by him through thick and thin and elected to settle outside the Territory; the first year they settled

near the Hudson Bay fort on the north side of the Columbia; then they were induced by Michael T. Simmons to settle at Puget Sound near present day Tumwater, WA

SJ : Jan 21, 1994 10:1; pioneer of 1844; born a free man in PA; traveled trail with wife and five children; settled in what later was WA state; purchased the first ship owned by early settlers, The Orbit, which cost \$35,000; ship was used to ship wood products to CA; died 1863

TOPA: 1887 p.68-69 settled Thurston Co, WA, emigrant of 1844; George W. Bush, b. 15 Mar 1778 PA, mulatto

TOPA: 1876 p.40, George W. Bush, emigrant of 1844

File Friendly Suit

**To Have George Bush Estate Settled
by the Superior Court.**

A friendly suit to distribute the valuable estate of George Bush who died intestate in 1863 was begun in the superior court yesterday by 16 heirs. Half of the heirs are suing the others in the test case. The defendants filed an answer admitting the allegations in the complaint in toto and joining with the plaintiffs in asking that the estate be distributed. There are 180 acres of valuable land at issue.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, WA, October 5, 1915 p.1]

Children of George Bush and Isabella James:

1. William Owen Bush

b. 1832 MO

d. 13 Feb 1907 Olympia, Thurston Co, WA

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

m. 1859

Mandana (Smith) Kimsey (Pioneer of 1847)

b. 01 Jan 1826 Howard Co, MO
d. 30 Mar 1899 Thurston Co, WA
buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA
d/o Dr. J. Smith and Nancy Scott
m1. 25 Apr 1847 Howard Co, MO to Duff Kimsey

1850: Washington Co, OT, December 5, 1850; Wm. O. Bush, 20, MO [enumerated in household of Gilbert Frost]

1860: Olympia PO, Thurston Co, WA, June 10, 1860; W.O. Bush, 27, mulatto, farmer, \$2500 \$1085, MO; Mary, 35, MO; D.L. Kimsey, 11, m, OR; H.J., 10, f, OR; J.D., 7, m, OR; N.T., 6, f, OR; F.P., 6, m, OR [wife and her children –white]

1870: Grand Mound, Thurston Co, WA, July 5, 1870; Wm O. Bush, 37, farmer, \$1200 \$900, MO; Mandana, 44, keeping house, MO; Doctor S. Kimsey, 21, farm laborer, OR; Hannah J., 20, at home, OR; James D., 17, at home, OR; Nancy T., 16, at home, OR; Franklin P., 16, at home, OR; John Shotwell Bush, 7, at home, WT; Isabell Bush, 4, at home, WT [everyone in household listed as white]

Children of William Bush and Mandana Smith:

- i. John Shotwell Bush (1862-1947)
- ii. Mandana Isabelle Bush (1865-1921)

MRS. W. O. BUSH DEAD

The Pioneer Woman Passed Away
Yesterday on Bush Prairie.

One more pioneer has crossed the dark river. Yesterday Mrs. Mandana Bush, wife of Hon. W. O. Bush, died at the family home on Bush prairie of dropsy. Mrs. Bush had been an invalid for over a year. About six months ago her condition improved somewhat, but a relapse later set in and yesterday she passed peacefully away.

Mrs. Bush was born January 1, 1826, in Howard county Missouri. Her father, Dr. J. Smith, was a native of North Carolina, and her mother, whose name before marriage was Nancy Scott, was born in Virginia. They were married in Howard county, Mo., where they resided until 1847, when they crossed the plains with their son-in-law, Duff Kimsey, to whom their daughter, Mandana, was married April 25 of that year. Dr. Smith did not survive to complete the journey, his mourning family burying him at Green River. Duff Kimsey and wife settled in Marion county, Or., on a claim of 640 acres, where they resided for about ten years, when Mr. Kimsey died. Mrs. Kimsey continued to make that her home until her marriage to Mr. Bush in 1859. Two children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Bush: Belle, Mrs. George Gaston, and John S. Bush, both of whom reside on the old homestead.

The funeral of Mrs. Bush will be held on Saturday at 11 o'clock from the residence on Bush prairie. Relatives and friends of the family are invited to be present.

W. O. BUSH HONORED BY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR GOOD WORK

At its meeting held last night the Chamber of Commerce by a unanimous vote, honored Hon. W. O. Bush with the passage of the following resolutions prepared at the request of the chamber by Dr. L. P. Holbrook and John Miller Murphy:

"This body, together with the enterprising citizens of Thurston county, have noted with pride and satisfaction the enthusiastic and efficient work of our worthy citizen, Hon. W. O. Bush, in putting before the world a faithful exhibit of the agricultural products of this county at Philadelphia, in '76; at Chicago, in '93; at Buffalo, in 1901, and at St. Louis, in 1904. We admire the excellence of his exhibits, the persistency of his efforts and the success that has crowned his labors. The most of us have had but little opportunity to qualify ourselves for appreciation of the Herculean effort he has made, or to estimate the time he has spent and the money he has expended. We vote with much satisfaction that even yet, in his declining health and ripening years, his heart is in this work. His family and every member of this community may be proud of so worthy a citizen. We commend his modesty and persistency to the study and imitation of our young men. Such a life has its highest reward in the individual character it develops and the character-building force on the entire community is not to be computed.

"We desire to extend to Mr. W. O. Bush our hearty congratulations on the successful issue of his efforts. We trust that his closing days may be as

golden as the beautiful grain he has gathered and that he may come to his final reward 'like a shock of corn fully ripe to the harvest.'"

PIONEER W. O. BUSH IS DEAD

W. O. Bush, one of the oldest and most famous pioneers of the state of Washington, died at midnight last night at St. Peter's hospital. With his two brothers who survive him, Mr. Bush was one of the oldest settlers of the territory of Washington, having located in Thurston county in 1845. Closely identified with the history of the country which he helped to carve from the wilderness, Mr. Bush in later life won fame for himself and the county by his exhibit of cereals grown in this county which won gold medals in competition with the world at the Centennial exposition, the Chicago worlds' fair, the Buffalo exposition and the St. Louis exposition. Probably no resident of the state or territory throughout its history has done more to advertise the state than W. O. Bush.

Mr. Bush has been in poor health for a number of years, through constitutional ailments attending old age, and a few days ago he was brought to the hospital. He gradually sank until the end came peacefully last night.

With his father, mother and brothers, W. O. Bush crossed the plains from Missouri in 1844, reaching Bush prairie in this county the following year. W. O. Bush was a native of Missouri, having been born there in 1822. He has resided continually in Thurston county since moving here. His wife died several years ago. He is survived by two children, Mrs. George Gaston, of this city, and John S. Bush. Two of his brothers, Louis and H. S. Bush, also survive him. Funeral arrangements have not yet been made.

FUNERAL OF W. O. BUSH SATURDAY

The funeral of W. O. Bush, the well known pioneer, who died Wednesday evening at St. Peter's hospital, will be held from the family residence at Bush prairie Saturday morning at 11 o'clock. Interment will be in the Bush prairie cemetery.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, WA, Friday, February 15, 1907 p.5]

The will of the late W. O. Bush was filed for probate in the superior court yesterday. The principal part of the will was the disposition of his fine 740 acre farm at Bush prairie. One-third went to his son, John Bush, one-third to his daughter, Mrs. George Gaston, and the remaining third to Mrs. Kimsey, his stepdaughter.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, WA, Saturday, March 16, 1907 p.1]

WILL AND CODICIL OF LATE W. O. BUSH

Three Undivided Bequests of the Estate to B& Merely Held, Unincumbered, During Their Lifetime, for Their Children—Division After Death of Last Legatee.

The will of the late W. O. Bush was admitted to probate this morning by Judge Linn. John S. Bush, Belle Gaston, the wife of George Gaston and Hanner J. and Nellie Kimsey are the legatees, as announced in The Recorder some time ago. John Bush and Mrs. Gaston each receive a full one-third of all real estate. Hanner J. and Nellie Kimsey are to receive one-third of all the real estate and the undisturbed use of all the personal property including the house on the farm, during their lifetime.

The legatees only hold the property for their children. The will strictly forbids the placing of any mortgage upon any of the property. The legatee making the attempt will lose all interest in the property which will be equally divided among the other two. The legatees have only the use of the property during their natural life. At the date of the death of the last survivor all real estate shall be equally divided share and share alike among the living children of the legatees.

All the legatees are named as executors and executrix of the will. They will act without bonds. The will was witnessed by J. W. Robinson and M. G. Royal.

The codicil that in case Hanner and Nellie Kimsey both die without offspring their share be equally divided among the living children of John S. Bush and Mrs. Gaston. The codicil is witnessed by A. J. Falknor and L. R. Lounsbury.

[Olympia Daily Recorder, Olympia, WA, Thursday, April 11, 1907 p.6]

2. Joseph Talbot Bush

b. 1833 MO

d. 23 Jan 1904 Orting, Pierce Co, WA

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

m. Never married

1850: Lewis Co, Oregon Territory, November 25, 1850; George Bush, 56, black, farmer, \$3000, VA; Isabella, 43, TN; Talbert, 17, m, MO; Rail B., 14, m, MO; Henry S., 11, m, MO; January J., 8, m, MO; Louis S., 4, m, OT

1860: Olympia PO, Thurston Co, WA, June 26, 1860; Geo. Bush, 70, black, farmer, \$5500 \$2725, PA; Isabella, 49, white, TN; Tolbert, 24, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; Raby, 22, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; Sanford, 19, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; A.J., 16, mulatto, farm laborer, MO; Lewis, 13, mulatto, farm laborer, WT; James Town/Farm, 28, white, laborer, France

SENT TO STEILACOOM.

An Old Settler Committed to the Insane Asylum.

Joseph T. Bush was examined yesterday before Judge Robinson by Doctors Armstrong and Kincaid, declared insane and sent to Steilacoom. Bush was sent to the asylum first in February last and discharged in March as cured. He soon after, however, gave fresh evidences of insanity, and of late has grown worse. He was at first possessed of a religious mania, and recently has manifested homicidal and incendiary tendencies. He has been a resident of Washington for 47 years, and is a bachelor.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, WA, July 9, 1891 p.4]

DISCHARGED.—Joseph T. Bush and John Adams, Thurston county patients, have been discharged from the Steilacoom asylum, having recovered their sanity.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, WA, April 3, 1892 p.4]

DEATH OF A PIONEER.

John T. Bush Passes Away at the Soldiers' Home.

(Special to The Herald)

Olympia, Jan. 27—Joseph T. Bush, of Thurston county, died at the Soldiers' home in Orting. Mr. Bush was one of the oldest pioneers of the state, coming to this state from Missouri in 1844. He was unmarried and is survived by three brothers, who reside in Thurston county.

[Bellingham Herald, Bellingham, Wednesday, January 27, 1904 p.6]

NORTHWEST DEAD.

Funeral of Joseph Talbot Bush.

OLYMPIA, Wash., Jan. 26.—(Special.)—The funeral occurred in this city today of Joseph Talbot Bush, one of the oldest pioneers of the state, who died at the Soldiers' Home at Orting last Saturday. Mr. Bush was a veteran of the early Indian Wars and the Civil War, and last evening his body arrived from the Soldiers' Home under a special escort of Indian and Civil War veterans. The escort was composed of Commander William Doherty, of C. M. Reed Post, G. A. R.; Captain U. E. Hicks, Lieutenant VanOgle, Matthew Shields, Peter Johnson and A. J. Dalton. The interment was made in Bush Prairie cemetery, under the auspices of the G. A. R.

Joseph Bush was born in Missouri in 1823, and crossed the plains with his father, the famous pioneer, John S. Bush, in 1844. The elder Bush died in 1863, and Joseph Bush and his three brothers all continued to reside in this county. The three brothers, W. O. Bush, Louis Bush and Sanford Bush, still survive him.

[Oregonian, Portland, OR, January 27, 1904 p.6]

COMRADES PAY LAST TRIBUTE

Remains of J. T. Bush, An Old
Pioneer Brought Here for
Interment.

The remains of Joseph Talbot Bush, familiarly known as "Tall" Bush, one of the oldest pioneers in the state of Washington, were brought to the city last night from the soldiers' home at Orting, where Mr. Bush passed away. An honorary escort of veterans of the civil war and the Washington Indian war accompanied the remains to the city. Today the remains will be laid at rest in the old Bush prairie cemetery near Tumwater and a few miles from the home where he lived for fifty years. Joseph Bush was a son of the famous pioneer, John S. Bush, who crossed the plains to the Pacific coast, coming as far north as the Columbia river in 1814, and who came to Washington with his family, including Joseph, in 1844, settling on a donation claim on what is now known as Bush prairie and which has since been their home. The elder Bush passed away in 1863, and his widow a few years later, but his sons have since done much to perpetuate the family name. Joseph, who died yesterday, was born in Missouri in 1833 and was a boy of 11 years when his parents started across the plains to the Oregon country. They were eight months in crossing the plains from Jackson, Mo., to The Dalles, Oregon, and after a few weeks pushed on to the head of Puget Sound by way of the Columbia river and the Cowlitz.

He was never prominent in the affairs of the territory but did his share toward its development. He took an active part in the Indian wars of the early fifties and went east and enlisted during the Civil war. Accordingly he was both an Indian war veteran and a member of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Three brothers survive him. They are W. O. Bush, who has been so prominently connected with the early history of the territory and whose success in growing cereals in this county has won him gold medals in the expositions of the past thirty years; the fame of the Bush exhibit is world-wide; Louis Bush and Sanford Bush, both of this county.

The members of the escort of veterans who accompanied the remains of their comrade to the city as a mark of respect are: Commander William Doherty of C. M. Reed post, G. A. R.; Capt. U. E. Hicks, Lieutenant Van Ogle, Matthew Shields, Peter Johnson, A. J. Dalton.

The funeral cortege will leave Bates' undertaking parlors at 9:30 o'clock this morning, proceeding in carriages to the Bush prairie cemetery, where the services will be held by Rev. E. Hopkins at 11 o'clock. All of the friends of the family and all comrades of the G. A. R. are invited to attend the services.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, WA, January 26, 1904, p. 1]

3. Riley Bailey Bush

b. 1836 MO

d. 01 Jan 1866 Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

m. Never married

1850: Lewis Co, Oregon Territory, November 25, 1850; George Bush, 56, black, farmer, \$3000, VA; Isabella, 43, TN; Talbert, 17, m, MO; Rail B., 14, m, MO; Henry S., 11, m, MO; Jeruary J., 8, m, MO; Louis S., 4, m, OT

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farm laborer, MO; Lewis, 13, mulatto, farm laborer, WT; James Town/Farm, 28, white, laborer, France

Suicide.—Bailly Bush, the son of a farmer residing near Olympia, was found dead near his father's house, a few days since, evidently having blown out his brains with a rifle found by his side. He had one boot and stocking off, and it is supposed that he had placed the rifle under his chin, and pulled the trigger with one of his toes. He was thought to have been laboring under an attack of the brain fever.

[Weekly Gazette, Seattle, WA, January 12, 1866]

4. Henry Sanford Bush

b. 1839 MO

d. 25 Dec 1913 Olympia, Thurston Co, WA

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

m. Never married

1850: Lewis Co, Oregon Territory, November 25, 1850; George Bush, 56, black, farmer, \$3000, VA; Isabella, 43, TN; Talbert, 17, m, MO; Rail B., 14, m, MO; Henry S., 11, m, MO; January J., 8, m, MO; Louis S., 4, m, OT

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1870: Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA, June 25, 1870; Henry Bush, 28, mulatto, farmer, \$2500 \$500, MO; J. Jackson, 26, mulatto, farmer laborer, MO; Lewis, 23, mulatto, farm laborer, WT

H. S. BUSH DIES; LIVED 68 YEARS ON OLD HOME RANCH PLACE

H. S. Bush, aged 73 years years, a pioneer of this country, having been a resident of this county for 68 years, died at the St. Peter's hospital at 11:30 o'clock last evening. George Gaston and William Finley were at the bedside when the end came.

In 1845, when a child, Mr. Bush came to Thurston county with his parents. They located on what has since become known as Bush Prairie. For the entire 68 years he has made his home on the old original place.

Deceased had been failing for some time. Several weeks ago he underwent an operation for the amputation of a leg, gangrene making the operation necessary.

Surviving is one brother, L. N. Bush, of Bush Prairie; a nephew, John S. Bush; a niece, Mrs. George Gaston. He was never married. He was a brother of the late W. O. Bush.

Funeral services will be held at the home on Bush Prairie, Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, Rev. Mr. Hopkins, of Tumwater, officiating. Interment will be made in the Bush Prairie cemetery. Arrangements are in charge of H. N. Sticklin, undertaker.

[Olympia Record, Olympia, Washington, December 26, 1913, p. 1]

FUNERAL OF H. S. BUSH AT THE HOME TOMORROW

At the home on Bush Prairie at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning will be held the funeral services of H. S. Bush, who died at the St. Peter's hospital Thursday night. Rev. Mr. Hopkins will officiate with interment in the Bush Prairie cemetery. Mortician Sticklin in charge of arrangements.

The following pall bearers have been named by the relatives: William Finley, A. D. Drewery, E. V. Drewery, Arthur Jones, Andrew Nelson, C. Charles Dickgeiser.

" [Olympia Record, Olympia, Washington, December 27, 1913, p. 1]

FUNERAL OF BUSH TO BE HELD TODAY

A number of the friends in Olympia of the late H. S. Bush, who died at St. Peter's hospital last Thursday, will attend the funeral services which will be held at the family home on Bush prairie at 11 o'clock this morning. The services will be conducted by Rev. Hopkins of Tumwater, and the following friends will act as pallbearers: William Finley, A. D. Drewery, E. Z. Drewery, Arthur Jones, Andrew Nelson and Charles Dickgeiser.

Mr. Bush was one of the best known and most highly respected pioneers of the county, coming to this locality in 1845, when he was a child and remaining here during sixty-eight years of his life.

The deceased had been in failing health for a long time and several weeks ago had one of his legs amputated.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, Washington, December 28, 1913, p. 1]

5. January Jackson Bush

b. 1842 MO

d. 20 Dec 1888

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

1850: Lewis Co, Oregon Territory, November 25, 1850; George Bush, 56, black, farmer, \$3000, VA; Isabella, 43, TN; Talbert, 17, m, MO; Rail B., 14, m, MO; Henry S., 11, m, MO; January J., 8, m, MO; Louis S., 4, m, OT

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1870: Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA, June 25, 1870; Henry Bush, 28, mulatto, farmer, \$2500 \$500, MO; J. Jackson, 26, mulatto, farmer laborer, MO; Lewis, 23, mulatto, farm laborer, WT

6. Lewis Nisqually Bush

b. 25 Dec 1847 OT

d. 30 Mar 1923 Bush Prairie, Thurston Co, WA

buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA

1850: Lewis Co, Oregon Territory, November 25, 1850; George Bush, 56, black, farmer, \$3000, VA; Isabella, 43, TN; Talbert, 17, m, MO; Rail B., 14, m, MO; Henry S., 11, m, MO; January J., 8, m, MO; Louis S., 4, m, OT

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1870: Tumwater, Thurston Co, WA, June 25, 1870; Henry Bush, 28, mulatto, farmer, \$2500 \$500, MO; J. Jackson, 26, mulatto, farmer laborer, MO; Lewis, 23, mulatto, farm laborer, WT

“Lewis N. Bush, the youngest of Thurston county's native sons passed away at the family home, Bush Prairie last evening. The deceased, who was the first child born in Thurston county, with the exception of the native Indians, was born on Bush Prairie Christmas day, 1847, and was of the pioneer Bush family, after which the prairie was named. The father, George Bush, with his family came to the county in 1845 and since the home has been one of the attractive beauty spots of this part of the state. Lewis was the last of the children to pass away. The other sons, W. Owen, the arranger of the famous Bush exhibit at the Chicago exposition, and a former member of the Washington legislature, was the oldest, next in order were J. T., Sanford, Riley B., and J. J. Of the third generation, John S. Bush, well known occupant of the old home, is the only survivor. The remains are at the Jesse T. Mills Mortuary.” [Olympia Daily Recorder. Olympia, WA, March 31, 1923 p. 1]