

## **The History of the Oregon State Hospital from 1883-2012**

The history of the Oregon State Hospital includes historical facts regarding insanity from the late 1800's to the current time. The information obtained, includes how these people were affected and the treatment they received from that time, and how the hospital has changed over the years to include better care, treatment, and rehabilitation. The description includes how the new restoration of the hospital will innovate better lives for those with mental illnesses, and how these newer improvements have contributed to the success of today's mental health.

From its inception, in 1883, The Oregon State Hospital, called then, The Oregon State Insane Asylum, was considered a safe place where the virtually "insane" would go. In 1880, legislature passed an act in Oregon allowing creating a state run psychiatric facility or Asylum. In the late 1800's, a person would commit a crime, be mentally incapable of taking care of themselves, or a burden to society; an outbreak of anger, destruction, and an inability to function within their community might cause a family to place a member of their family here in order to receive "treatment" and hopefully get well. "Treatment" could mean back then being placed in a straight jacket given medication and group therapy. It could also mean that they would be restrained for a period of time and given limited freedoms. The Oregon State Hospital and its history enclose details about their history of being one of the best mental institutions for care. Meaning that those giving "Treatment" for those termed physically and mentally abusive to themselves or others could mean that a patient would receive immediate care. Care would also entail group therapy, which includes the care from nurses, wardens and staff.

In order to reduce the amount of overcrowding at the Asylum in 1913, the Eastern Oregon State Asylum was created, and in that same year, the Oregon Board of Control was instigated, calling the Asylum as we know it today as OSH or the Oregon State Hospital.

In 1958, the population of mental patients increased and peaked to 3,545 patients, and was the cause to open Columbia Park Hospital in The Dalles, 1959-1973, Dammasch State Hospital in Wilsonville, 1961 to 1995, and Holladay Park Medical Center in Portland, 1995 to present. Oregon State Hospital is an operating hospital in conjunction with the Oregon Department of Health Services (DHS) and two campuses in Salem and Portland.

The Superintendent has a large job to do, offering care for his patients and also obligations to complete administrative details. He would complete an intake on a new patient, with details of how the patient ended up in prison or jail. He would need to analyze what took place while in confinement, and what would be needed to receive and complete therapy. The length of time needed to complete

therapeutic care, rehabilitation and then return home or back to their community would also be analyzed. (Similar to the description of Dr. Spivey , Dr. Dean Brooks M.D and Patrick McMurphy, Jack Nicholson played in the movie “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.”) This portion of the movie was a real enacted portion of how a real patient and doctor relate to one another. An example of this is when: Jack Nicholson and Dr. Dean Brooks portray this scene in the Doctor’s office. Dr. Dean Brook’s “Bushel of Shoes” story, describes the dehumanizing effect that institutions can have on a patient that he worked so hard to transform. From his staff to the custodial care of just monitoring a patient, he brought about tools to help educate a patient and them learn how to cope with and solve problems. The methods that he brought to the Oregon State Hospital are still very useful today. He also was the first to instigate the program for Alcohol Anonymous at the State Hospital. Giving care for individuals infested by alcoholism. As of today he chairs the board of Dual Diagnosis, which is a program designed for those who are trying to recover from alcoholism and mental illnesses.

In 2008, decisions to restore the old Historic and outdated buildings of the Kirkbride building and to replace the J-Building, was underway. In 2009, the legislature made plans to replace the old hospital with a newer hospital. The reconstruction will offer patients better care and a more modern updated, educational environment; it will offer a higher level of security for patients that need to recover from mental illnesses.

The old Historic building that was built in 1883 still remains as a restored part of the Oregon Historic Museum. It will also preserve and educate people of all levels of status and education. The museum will house information that has been preserved from historical details of the Oregon Insane Asylum in 1883, to the current reconstruction of the Oregon State Hospital. The restoration of the Oregon Museum, set to open in May of 2012, is to include the relationship of how the environment, genetics and the development of an individual encompass how we must function and live in our society today.

## Insanity, 1894-1896

The following list was published in the 7th Biennial Report of the Oregon State Insane Asylum. It lists “causes for insanity” of people admitted to the hospital between December 1894 and November 1896.

Cause	Male	Female	Total	Cause	Male	Female	Total
Brain Softening		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Masturbation	<u>24</u>		<u>24</u>
Business Trouble	<u>4</u>		<u>4</u>	Meningitis		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Childbirth		<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	Menopause		<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
Christian Science		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Morphine and cocaine	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
Concussion of Brain	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	Mental strain		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Congenital		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Melancholia	<u>3</u>		<u>3</u>
Cerebral embolism	<u>5</u>		<u>5</u>	Nervous prostration	<u>3</u>		<u>3</u>
Domestic Trouble	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	Old age	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>
Disappointment in Love	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	Overstudy	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>
Dissipation	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>	Overwork	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
Dementia		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Opium habit	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>
Epilepsy	<u>22</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>30</u>	Paralysis	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Exposure and solitude	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	Paranoia		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Exposure and sickness	<u>3</u>		<u>3</u>	Pneumonia		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Fright		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Puerperal trouble		<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
Financial Trouble	<u>7</u>		<u>7</u>	Religion	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>15</u>
Grief	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	Removal of ovaries		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
General debility		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Spinal meningitis	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Heredity	<u>10</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>25</u>	Spiritualism	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Hydrocephalus	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>	Syphilis	<u>3</u>		<u>3</u>
Idiocy	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	Solitude	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>
Intemperance	<u>28</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>31</u>	Scarlatina		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Ill health	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	Starvation		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Injury to head	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>17</u>	Suppressed eruption	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>
Injury	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	Sunstroke	<u>5</u>		<u>5</u>
Injury and religion	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	Typhoid fever	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Intemperance and epilepsy	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	Trouble	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
La grippe	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	Tobacco	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>
Loss of sleep	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>	Unknown	<u>199</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>275</u>
Lead poisoning	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	Uterine disease		<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>
Morphine habit	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>23</u>	Worry	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>

This list was created in the late 1800’s and describes the problems that triggered “insanity” and a need for institutionalization. Many of these are items that an ordinary person may have. It is difficult to know that a person, just by looking at him or her, can be suffering from any of these problems creating a hidden transparency not easily recognized.

Sources of Information

<http://oshmuseum.wordpress.com/hospital/>

<http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org>

“One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”, Directed by Milos Forman and produced by Saul Zaentz and Michael Douglas, copy write 1976