Herbert Hoover in Oregon

Herbert Hoover, the thirty-first president of the United States, spent six years in Oregon as a boy. He moved to the state in 1885, a year after his mother's death had left him, his brother, and his sister orphans. Hoover moved to Newberg to live with his uncle John Minthorn who, like Hoover's mother, was a minister in the Society of Friends. Minthorn had lost his own son the year before and asked that his sister's younger son come to live with him. The family agreed, since this seemed a promising opportunity for the eleven-year-old boy.

Minthorn had recently become superintendent of the Friends Pacific Academy in the small Quaker village of Newberg, and Hoover attended the school for three years until the Minthorn family moved to Salem. His uncle helped to establish the Oregon Land Company in Salem, and Hoover worked for the business as an office boy. His horizons began to widen, however, and the teenager resolved to resume his education. Learning that the new Leland Stanford Jr. University in California would offer free tuition, Hoover decided to enroll in its pioneer class and pursue a career in engineering. He left Oregon for California in the summer of 1891, shortly after his seventeenth birthday.

Hoover later remembered Oregon fondly, particularly the natural world that he encountered there. In his memoirs, he wrote, "Oregon lives in my mind for its gleaming wheat fields, its abundant fruit, its luxuriant forest vegetation, and the fish in its mountain streams. To step into its forests with their tangles of berry bushes, their ferns, their masses of wild-flowers stirs up odors peculiar to Oregon. Within these woods are never-ending journeys of discovery."

Written by Jeremy Mouat

Further Reading:

Hoover, Herbert. *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874 - 1920.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1951.

Nash, George H. *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Engineer, 1874 - 1914.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1983.

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