



# TILLAMOOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

PO. BOX 123, TILLAMOOK, OR 97141

JUNE 2025

*Well hello there friend!*

*Diane + Barb*

## Discovering History with Find a Grave: A Tool for Preserving Tillamook County's Past *by Lisa Sears*

In our mission to preserve and honor the stories of Tillamook County's past, the Tillamook County Historical Society has embraced modern tools that help make history accessible to all. One such tool is Find a Grave, a free online database that allows users to search for and contribute information about burial sites around the world.

Founded in 1995, Find a Grave connects families, genealogists, historians, and curious minds with the final resting places of millions. Users can view headstone photos, and contribute memorials, creating a rich, shared archive of personal and local history.

One particularly valuable feature is the ability to add GPS coordinates to "memorials" on the site. In rural areas like Tillamook County, this function provides a tremendous benefit. Many of our cemeteries have limited signage and mapping and no one on site to direct people to the graves they are looking for. GPS mapping ensures these burial sites are precisely documented, easily found, and preserved for future generations.

Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and members of the Tillamook County Historical Society, several local cemeteries have already been GPS-mapped in our county and added to the Find a Grave database:

- Bay City IOOF Cemetery
- IOOF Cemetery (Tillamook IOOF)
- Nestucca Valley Community Cemetery
- Oretown Cemetery
- Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery
- Sunset Heights Memorial Gardens
- Union Pioneer Cemetery

In addition to a picture of the grave marker & GPS coordinates, we try to document an updated picture of a cleaned grave marker (with date and type of cleaning), a picture of the person and finally a picture of the obituary.



We encourage our community members to explore Find a Grave, contribute to the project, or join us in future efforts to preserve and share the heritage buried in these sacred spaces. Every headstone tells a story, and together we can ensure none of them are lost.

For more information or to get involved, please contact the Tillamook County Historical Society.



Tuesday, July 8, 2025 will be our annual meeting, where election of officers will take place. The meeting will be held at the Tillamook Main Library, at 1 pm. Bring a sack lunch and learn what your Tillamook County Historical Society has planned for the future.

## MUNSON CREEK FALLS Eric Simmons



September 1957 from the top of the falls. From family photos.

At a September 1956 meeting of Pleasant Valley Grange, chartered in 1915, Donna Simmons suggested a trail-blazing project to Munson Falls and thus the journey to making it into a park was born.

On September 20th, 1956, Grange members Bob Hercher and Earl Pruitt were appointed to seek information concerning the Falls and over the next few months, they met with various County officials.



In January of 1957 the County judge stated the project was going well and Mr. Hercher met with a group concerning the Park. The County Surveyor, William Anderson, was to map and survey the area and then a deal was to be discussed with the owners of the property, Publishers Paper Company. Mr. Anderson requested the meeting with Publisher's to discuss trading property with the County in return for the Munson Falls property.

It was later reported that

Publishers Paper Company declined the deal as they felt it would be too much of a fire risk in the midst of their timber. In July of 1957, Mr. Hercher reported the Munson Falls Park project was being put on hold indefinitely.

The years went by and at the urging of Gerry Hysmith and others, in 1966, Publishers Paper Co. agreed to let the County use approximately 25 acres of the Munson Falls area as a County Park.



Seven and a half miles south of Tillamook on Highway 101, you'll see the sign for Munson Falls Natural Area. Travel 1.6 miles to the east of the highway, and you'll find the parking area where it's a short quarter mile hike to the Falls.

Goran Munson, for whom the Creek and Falls was named, was born in Sweden on November 22, 1843, and came to America in 1866 at the age of 23 years old. He settled in Michigan for a short time before moving to Chicago, where he followed his trade as a brickmason. He eventually came to Tillamook in 1879, buying land in Pleasant Valley, then known as Nestocton.

For many years he was Postmaster of the Nestocton Post Office, the second Post Office in Tillamook County, from 1867 to 1904. The home of each Postmaster in the rural areas was where each Post Office was located.

He sold his property in Pleasant Valley and bought several other ranches before finally moving to Tillamook where he passed away in 1918.

The Park was dedicated October 12, 1966. The contract with the County stated it was a nontransferable, revokable license agreement lease at \$1.00 per year. The County was to keep up trails, parking and maintain the road and park area. The timber company could give three years advance notice to cancel the license agreement.

Simpson Timber Company eventually purchased the land from Publisher's Paper and in May of 1998, Tillamook County approved a request from Simpson Timber Company to allow a parcel less than 80 acres, 61 acres, to be used as a park at Munson Creek Falls.

Shortly thereafter, Western River Conservancy purchased the approximate 61 acres from Simpson Timber Company for half of its assessed value, with money from the Paul Allen Forest Protection Foundation, intending to deed it to Oregon State Parks and Recreation for continued use as a Park, which they did.

Some early brochures stated the Falls was only 266 feet high, although I believe the lower section of the falls was not included in the total height.

Minnie Desmond Wade, a longtime resident, related that when she was young, Pleasant Valley Church would have picnics at the Falls, riding on a horse-drawn wagon through Mrs. Margaret Schild's place and by the Emdorf house where they had country dances (the former Munson house). They had the picnic in the meadow and would climb over logs on a rough trail to the first bench of the falls.

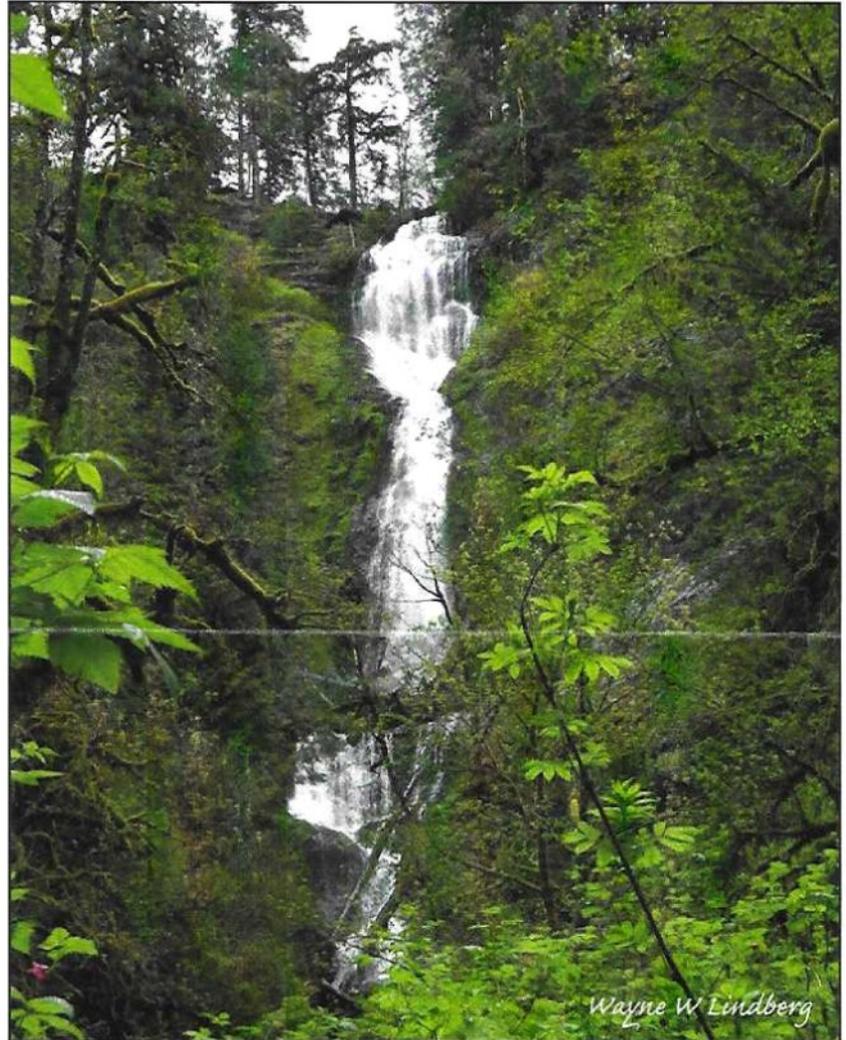
In 1956, at the age of five years old, I hiked with my family to the Falls and as I recall, did not enjoy going over and around logs and through the brush.

At one time there were two trails to view the Falls, the upper one having a viewing platform directly across from the Falls.

In 1967, Pleasant Valley Grange had their very first pancake breakfast at the park and in 1988, Grangers Paul Jones, Wes Simmons, and Scott Simmons rebuilt a new restroom with materials provided by the County Parks Department.

After 69 years as a park it still is a wonderful place to visit.

*This story was written with information compiled by Eric Simmons from newspaper articles written by Donna Simmons, Gerry Hysmith, Kyle Odegard, Charles Cruse, the minutes of Pleasant Valley Grange, and visiting with local community members.*



*The color photo of the falls is used with permission by Wayne W. Lindberg. [https://www.facebook.com/WWLindbergphotography/photos\\_albums](https://www.facebook.com/WWLindbergphotography/photos_albums)*

# TILLAMOOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Tillamook County Historical Society became a 501(c)3 in 1984 to bring together those persons interested in preserving the history of Tillamook County. TCHS is exploring new ways to reach out to people for 2025. Our meetings are usually on the second Tuesday of the month, at 1 p.m., at the Tillamook Main Library. Keep checking on our Facebook page for updates.

We are a separate organization from the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum and Tillamook Pioneer Association, concentrating on doing a number of projects such as placing historic plaques, conducting historical tours, printing books about local history and producing a semi-annual newsletter with local history topics and upcoming events. Annual dues are \$20.00 for Family Membership.

**If you would like to keep receiving this newsletter, please make sure your dues are paid for the current year. We will be dropping those who are more than a year behind from the mailing list. Thank you.**

**PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR EMAIL HAS CHANGED!**



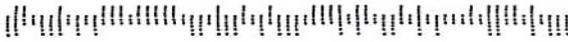
Watch for updates on meetings and events on our facebook page.  
[www.facebook.com/tillamookcountyhistoricalsociety/](http://www.facebook.com/tillamookcountyhistoricalsociety/)

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EMAIL: [tillamookhistory@gmail.com](mailto:tillamookhistory@gmail.com)



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