

Gustavus Hines (1809-1873)

By William L. Lang

Gustavus Hines came to Oregon at age thirty as part of the Willamette Mission's Great Reinforcement, which brought a hundred men, women, and children to the Methodist mission near present-day Salem. For over four decades, Hines devoted his life to furthering Methodism and establishing Methodist education in Oregon. He was principally responsible for establishing the Oregon Institute in 1842, a school that later became Willamette University.

Hines was Oregon's first historian, chronicling the Oregon mission in *A Voyage Round the World: With a History of Oregon Mission* in 1850, which included early descriptions of Native people in the Umpqua Valley, and *Oregon and Its Institutions: Comprising a Full History of the Willamette University* in 1868. He was born in Herkimer, New York, in 1809, and became a Methodist itinerant preacher in 1832. He drew the attention of Jason Lee when Lee returned east from his Willamette Mission in 1838 to recruit missionaries. Hines accepted an appointment in April 1839 to the Oregon mission, and along with his wife Lydia Bryant Hines, he shipped out on the *Lausanne* for Oregon, arriving there in 1840.

In Oregon, Lee assigned Hines to scout out a location for a mission on the Umpqua River, but Hines thought the effort would be too difficult. He committed his energy to reinvigorating the Willamette Mission and became one of the original incorporators of the Oregon Institute. He also helped establish a Methodist church in Oregon City in 1844. Lydia Hines, however, disliked living in Oregon and wanted to return to New York, and she and Gustavus traveled there in 1844.

Jason Lee also journeyed east in 1844 to defend his management of the mission before the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions. After Lee departed and while Gustavus and Lydia Hines were in Hawai'i on their trip east, they learned that Lee's second wife, Lucy Thompson Lee, had died, leaving their two-year-old daughter, Lucy Anna Maria Lee, without support. The couple returned to Oregon, where they accepted the charge of Lee's daughter, and took up their journey to New York in 1845, only to find that Lee had died after a brief illness while visiting his sister in Stanstead, Vermont. Gustavus and Lydia became Lucy's guardians.

Back in New York, Hines received an assignment from the Methodist New York Conference to Genesee, where he preached for eight years, but he did not abandon his interest in Oregon. In December 1852, he decided to return to Oregon, along with his wife, Lucy Lee, and three of his brothers. They arrived in Salem in October 1853. Hines never again left Oregon, where he put his energy into the Oregon Institute and the administration of Willamette University. He also promoted the community of Salem in articles he wrote for the *Pacific Christian Advocate* and often preached at Willamette Valley churches.

Lydia Hines died in 1870, and Gustavus Hines died of a lung infection in 1873. Lucy Anna Maria Lee became a teacher at Willamette University, married a fellow student, Francis Grubbs, and had one child, Ethel. She died at age thirty-nine in 1881.

Sources

Peters, Harold J. ed. *Seven Months to Oregon: 1853, Diaries, Letters and Reminiscent Accounts*. Tooele, Utah: The Patrice Press, 2008.

Gatke, Robert M. *Chronicles of Willamette*. Portland, Ore.: Binfords and Mort, 1943.

The Oregon Encyclopedia

https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hines_gustavus/