

Partial History of Thomas Cully

The neighborhood and one of the major streets in Cully take their name from an early pioneer. Thomas Cully was born in either 1810 or 1823 in England and settled on this donation land claim farm in the Columbia Slough in 1846. It is said that Thomas Cully came to Oregon from Texas where he was a Texas ranger under Sam Houston, but there is no record of him being in the Texas Rangers. In Oregon, he was a stone mason by trade and built the first chimney in Portland in a house erected by F. W. Pettygrove near the corner of SW First and Washington. He lived in the Cully area thereafter, except, it is said, for a short time spent in California gold mines. His neighbors included George and Andrew Pullen, Anthony Whitaker, Henry Holtgrieve, A.J. Dufur and the Paddocks.

Thomas Cully was said to be an honest and industrial man, accumulating considerable property including the 640 acre land claim and a block on the east side of Portland plus additional parcels. His 1884 commercial building at SE Oak and Martin Luther King Blvd. still stands. Thomas Cully married Rebecca Jones in 1850 and they had 14 children.

The children were:

Richard (1852 - 1861) who drown in the Columbia Slough

William Cully (1854 - 1854)

Anthony (1855) who died as a baby at the age of 5 weeks

James Martin (1856 - 1940)

Nancy Eveline (1860-1889) married to Laban Hill, Oscan Hubbard and Preston Philbrick

Henry (1862 - 1933)

Mary Ellen Pike (1865 - 1891) married Henry Pike

Thomas Walter (1867-1868)

John (1869 - 1903)

George (1872 - 1935)

Rebecca Christena Josephine (who called herself Christena RJ) (1873-1948) married Thomas Reed and George Gradt and was the last of the Cully children to reside on the Cully Land Claim

Almeda Hannah (1874-1956) married Melchior Egger

Martha Jane (1877 - 1892) and her twin brother Charles (1877 - 1959)

Nancy Eveline Cully may have a daughter [from the Will of Thomas Cully 1891

Thomas Cully died in January 5 or 6 1891 at the age of 81 from injuries he received after being thrown from his wagon when ascending "Gravelly Hill". The kingbelt of his buggy broke, the forewheels passed under the vehicle and he was thrown over the dashboard. Dr. Rafferty was called and re-set Tom Cully's dislocated shoulder. Internal injuries were serious and he died shortly thereafter. The youngest child at the time 13 years old and all the children lived on the old homestead or in the vicinity. Thomas Cully was buried in Lone Fir Pioneer Cemetery.

Early East Portland Land Claims (ca. 1862)

North/Sandy Rd./Columbia River			South/Buttes/Johnson Creek		
Name	Acres	Township	Name	Acres	Township
Gideon Millard	637	1N2E	Robert Wilmot	323	1N3E
Anthony Whittaker	649	1N2E	Levi Nelson	320	1S2E
Thomas Cully	637	1N2E	Ezra Johnson	318	1S2E
George M. Long	319	1N2E	Jacob Johnson	319	1S2E
E. L. Quimby	639	1N2E	Emanuel Himmon	160	1S2E
David Powell	323	1N2E	Francis N. Elliot	640	1S2E
Gideon Millard	587	1N2E	Plympton Kelley	322	1S2E
Irvine Taylor (abandoned)	321	1N2E	Ebenezer Creswell	643	1S2E
Henry Holtgrieve	275	1N2E	Benjamin F. Starrs	316	1S2E
Charles Stevenson	264	1N2E	Jacob Wills	642	1S1E/1S2E
John Powell	320	1N2E	George Wills	640	1S1E/1S2E
David Powell	324	1N2E	Alanzo Gates	640	1S2E/1S3E
William Wilkes	640	1N2E	Nathaniel Hamlin	643	1S3E
George Hamilton	320	1N2E	Lemuel Jenne	320	1S3E
Jesse Flemming	315	1N2E/1N3E			

Source: Oregon General Land Office cadastral survey maps, 1860-1862, available: libweb.uoregon.edu/map/map_resources/about_glo.html. See Maps in Appendix A.

Note: Many Donation Land Claims and claims under the 1862 Homestead Act were finalized later than the date of the source maps, and thus are not shown in this table. A fuller list of Federal land patents in East Portland is included in the appendices.