On the Road with Rutherford B. Hayes

Oregon’s First Presidential Visit, 1880

WHEN PRESIDENT RUTHERFORD B. HAYES became the first president to visit Oregon, he was figuratively following in the footsteps of his predecessors George Washington and James Madison. Like them, Hayes toured the country, using the power and prestige of the executive office to promote national harmony and prevent regional alienation. Hayes’s main goal for his Oregon visit, and indeed for his presidency, was to rebuild national harmony, still shattered eleven years after the Civil War. When he left Columbus, Ohio, on February 29, 1877, to move into the White House, Hayes gave a short farewell speech from his train. He recalled, as one historian paraphrased, “how he marched off the war in 1861 to do what he could to restore the union. Now he was leaving again, not to save the Union by force of arms but to seek a union of people’s hearts by works of love and peace.”

Today, “promote national harmony” might sound like abstract rhetoric, but for Hayes, the catastrophic results of regional alienation were as real as the battle scars crisscrossing his body.

Regional sectionalism — allied sections of the country putting their own needs ahead of the needs of the nation at large — permeated politics of the era, infecting decisions such as choosing railroad routes, granting statehood to western territories, and establishing or abolishing tariffs. It even affected international affairs, such as the annexation of Cuba. During the Civil War, the western states’ and territories’ allegiance to the federal government had been shaky at best. California Volunteers, for example, marched to Utah in 1862 to protect mail and telegraph lines, which some federal officials believed “were not safe in Mormon hands.” Throughout the Civil War, several California newspapers advocated that the state form an independent Pacific Republic with Oregon.

Retracing Hayes’s 1880 trip through Oregon shows that he successfully combined the power of the presidency with personal diplomacy to strengthen Oregon’s ties to the union — with time left over for impromptu rock-throwing contests on the Columbia River, teasing Oregonians about having web feet, and whale watching.

Hayes is best remembered today for the way he became president. The disputed election of 1876 forever saddled him with the nickname “Rutherford-fraud.” On November 7, 1876, early presidential election returns indicated Hayes had lost by about 250,000 votes to Democratic New York governor Samuel J. Tilden. The next day, polling officials in Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana raised accusations of voter fraud. All three states sent two conflicting certifications of election returns to Congress, as did Oregon. One of Oregon’s three electors, Republican John W. Watts, was a deputy postmaster in Lafayette. Article II, Section 1, of the U.S. Constitution states
no “Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.” Oregon’s Democratic governor, La Fayette Grover, declared Watts ineligible to be an elector and declared E.A. Cronin, a Democrat who supported Tilden, the legitimate third elector. The three-person Oregon canvassing board sent a certification of election to Congress attesting that all three Oregon electors voted for Hayes. Grover sent a certification of election saying two of the electors voted for Hayes and the third, Cronin, voted for Tilden.7

The Hayes-Tilden election was the first time Congress had been faced with deciding which of an individual state’s certifications of election was valid. Weeks of dithering and uncertainty stressed the nation. On January 29, 1877, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Electoral Commission Act, passed by both houses of Congress, authorizing a panel of five senators, five representatives, and five U.S. Supreme Court justices to decide which certificates of election from Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Oregon were valid.8

As the weeks of bickering in Congress dragged on, southern congressmen stalled and delayed the Electoral Commission’s progress. On February 26 and 27, Hayes’s representatives met with a group of southern congressmen for three sessions that became known as the Wormley Conference.9 The southerners agreed to drop their opposition to Hayes if he would remove U.S. Army troops from Louisiana and South Carolina, if Congress would fund construction of the Texas and Pacific railroad, and if Hayes would appoint a southerner to his cabinet and return home rule to the southern states.4 Hayes agreed, the Electoral Commission decided the election in Hayes’s favor, and on March 2, 1877, the president pro tempore of the Senate, Michigan Senator Thomas W. Ferry, declared Hayes the United States president of America’s nineteenth president.7

Bitterness and mistrust about the disputed election shadowed Hayes’s four-year term. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field, one of the members of the Electoral College, wrote to Matthew Deady, the federal district judge in Oregon, what many people likely were thinking: “The President, who owes his seat to the success of a gigantic conspiracy and fraud, is not finding his place a bed of roses. It is right that it should be so. He is evidently a very weak man, and hardly knows what to do.”10

Ironically, Hayes, who sought the presidency to reunify the nation, took office after an election that caused great national discord. His first presidential step toward repairing national unity was to end Reconstruction. Critics called it an act of cynical political expediency that abandoned black Americans to the mercies of repressive southern politics and strengthened southern sectionalism. But whatever the actual results, it is clear Hayes’s intent was healing and unification. In his inaugural address, Hayes reaffirmed his commitment to black Americans and explained why he believed ending Reconstruction was the right course: “Let me assure my countrymen of the Southern States that it is my earnest desire to regard and promote their truest interest — the interest of the white and of the colored people both and equally — and to put forth my best efforts in behalf of a civil policy which will forever wipe out in our political affairs the color line and the distinction between North and South, to the end that we may have not merely a united North or a united South, but a united country.”11

That intent to unify the country prompted Hayes’s decision to tour the West Coast, to use the prestige of the presidential office to reinforce national harmony there, and to prevent regional alienation. Hayes, who greatly admired George Washington, referred to the first president’s tour of all thirteen states when he told a crowd in Roseburg, Oregon: “We all desire that the relationship between the people of the older states and the people of this coast should be more kindly, friendly and fraternal. Therefore it seems to me altogether fitting and proper that I should follow the example of the most illustrious president of the republic, the first, who at the commencement of his term of office traveled through each and every one of the then existing states of this union. This reception is not intended to honor the qualities of anybody. It is a manifestation of the love and attachment to the government in which you all live, to the union, to the states, to the constitution and the principles of free government.”12

Washington’s goals for his precedent-setting tour were to strengthen support for the fledging national government and to reassure the country that the federal government would not resemble a monarchy or aristocracy. He wanted his tour to be “without any parade, or extraordinary ceremony.” In part because of his immense personal popularity, every city he visited...
held receptions, parades, and official ceremonies, leading critics to snipe about “the vileness of the adulation paid to Washington.” That criticism may be why Adams, Jefferson, and Madison chose not to tour the nation. “Traveling among the people on Washington’s model still looked too much like a monarchical progress to be acceptable in a republican nation,” writes Richard J. Ellis in *Presidential Travel: The Journey from George Washington to George W. Bush*. Ellis details the complete metamorphosis from early presidents using travel to demystify the presidency to modern-day presidents using travel to create the myth of an imperial presidency. Today, a president’s “entire traveling apparatus is set up to create a barrier between people and the president,” Ellis writes, with chief executives traveling in Air Force One and long motorcades with darkly tinted windows, staying in hotels sealed by the Secret Service, and delivering speeches from podiums made of bulletproof glass, separating presidents from audiences. “Contemporary presidential travel dramatizes the regal presidency rather than dispels it.”

On June 18, 1880, two days after the Forty-sixth Congress recessed, Hayes announced his plans to tour the Pacific Coast — becoming the first sitting president to travel west of Salt Lake City, which Ulysses S. Grant had visited in 1875. The *Washington Post* announced the commencement of his trip later that summer: “The fraudulent President, accompanied by his usual retinue of Cabinet ministers and army officers, leaves to-day for the Pacific slope, where he proposes still further to disgrace the office which he stole by making a series of partisan stump speeches. As anything in the way of a speech from Hayes is ineffective enough, the unfortunate inhabitants of our Western coast may well apprehend something nauseating in the warmed-over political twaddle which he now proposes to serve up to them.” But Oregon newspapers were enthusiastic about the presidential visit. Their reports show Hayes was correct in believing that, twenty years after statehood, many Oregonians felt Oregon was, if not estranged, certainly distant from the Union. The reports also show that Hayes, like Washington and Monroe before him, was correct in believing a presidential visit would overcome much of that feeling.

The *Daily Oregonian* editorialized:

The people of Oregon cannot but regard the visit of the president of the United States as a notable event. No president has ever before visited it, and no ex-president save General Grant. When President Jefferson organized and started the expedition of Lewis and Clark on its famous journey of exploration to the great river of the west, then scarcely known except as a half mythical name, the most sanguine dreamer could not have imagined that long before the close of the century the president of the United States would stand upon the banks and sail upon the waters of this river of Oregon, visiting here a state of the union upon the extreme western verge of the continent — a region bearing a name then nothing more than a mere geographical expression, quite as unfamiliar as any point in the indistinct geography of the still unknown and far distant western world.”

In his diary on August 19, 1880, Hayes outlined his goals for the trip: “As I now see it congratulations on the condition and prospects of our Country will almost always be appropriate. In order to make the talks practically useful, not merely vain boasting, let me trace the favorable conditions to the adoption of sound principals, and warn the people of some evils existing which threaten our future, such as . . . popular illiteracy, Sectional and race prejudices &c. &c.” Hayes’s notes about “race prejudice” reflect his concern about the surge in anti-Chinese racism as well as the federal government’s policies regarding the 325,464 Indians living in the United States, an issue he would address in Oregon. As president, Hayes steered federal Indian policy from a philosophy of subjugation or annihilation to one of assimilation. The *Oregonian*’s editorial on July 15, 1878, succinctly presented the polarized approaches: “There is no possible solution of the Indian question except through extinction of the Indian as an Indian. This may be done in two ways: First, by annihilation of the race; second, by such change of our policy as will make him strictly amenable to law, teach him individual responsibility and individual property, break up his tribal relations and dependence, and cause him to learn that he must support himself.” In addressing the “Indian question,” Hayes was entering a decades-old debate about Indians and America.

In 1849, administration of Indian policy began to shift from the War Department to the newly created Interior Department (now the U.S. Department of the Interior), and for the next thirty years, the two departments squabbled about responsibilities and basic philosophy. The Interior Department increasingly supported Indian rights and protection, while the army perceived its mission as protecting and encouraging white settlers, primarily by use of military force against Indians. By 1879, many of the military believed Indians no longer posed enough threat to justify having the War Department conduct Indian policy. At the same time, supporters of Indian assimilation highlighted what they considered the successes of Indian boarding schools, especially the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, which began admitting Indians in 1878, and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, which opened in 1879. In February 1879, Congress decided the Interior Department would have complete jurisdiction of Indian affairs. Hayes appointed reformer Carl Schurz as Secretary of the Interior to direct the president’s assimilation agenda, which included moving Indian children to boarding schools. Hayes would give one of the most significant speeches of his Pacific Tour at the Forest Grove Indian Industrial and Training School in Oregon, explaining
his firm commitment to assimilation and particularly to the establishment of off-reservation boarding schools. While Hayes viewed assimilation as a humane improvement to the federal government's Indian policy, scholars have attacked the policy, and particularly its off-reservation boarding schools, as an almost criminal, shameful part of the nation's heritage.24

For both moral and economic reasons, Hayes was also concerned about racism directed at Chinese immigrants. In his first State of the Union Address, he had acknowledged the importance of trade with nations of the Pacific Rim. Such trade was particularly important in Oregon, which by 1880 was beginning to attract the lucrative U.S.—China flour trade from California. The president was concerned that alienating China would financially hurt the United States. His concerns became prophetic in 1895, when Chinese, outraged by laws restricting them from entering the United States, organized a boycott of U.S. imports. Hayes had created a three-person commission in 1879 to renegotiate and modify the United States–China Burlingame treaty of 1868. The Chinese government, which agreed to control Chinese immigration to the United States in return for protection of trade and of Chinese immigrants living in this country, signed the treaty eleven days after Hayes returned from his Pacific tour.25

Hayes asked Commander of the Army Gen. William T. Sherman to organize the seventy-one-day journey in the West, and he asked Sherman and Secretary of War Alexander Ramsey to travel with him. Sherman was well known for his Civil War march through the South and the burning of Atlanta. After the Civil War, he commanded the Military Division of the Missouri and toured the West extensively. Grant promoted Sherman to Commander of the Army in 1869, and Sherman continued to visit the West frequently, including trips to Oregon in 1870 and 1877.26

Sherman accepted the task of organizing the trip like the good soldier he was, although he could not help grousing: "I am now very busy making my preparations [sic] for the Grand Tour to California, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico &c to begin Sept 1 . . . I expect less real pleasure than I usually experience on such occasions, because the President will be along, and I will have to defer to him as to routes delays &c. instead of being as usual Boss of the trip — Still I know the Country, and he does not — and he will have to follow his guide."27 Sherman assigned Col. John Jameson of the U.S. Army Railway Mail Service to help plan the trip, travel with the group, and keep the expense account.

Sherman went on the trip for two reasons: to protect the president, who traveled without bodyguards, and, with Secretary Ramsey, to inspect troops and posts. The U.S. Army, consisting of 25,000 soldiers, was facing its third major transition in nineteen years. After the Civil War, its emphasis had shifted to protecting the interests of white settlers on the western frontier, primarily by use of military force against Native Americans. Sherman had written in 1868, "true military policy will be for many years to keep small but well supplied posts along the great lines of travel east and west, marked by the two Pacific Railroads," but he also foresaw the end of that policy: "When these two great thoroughfares [railroads] reach the base of the Rocky Mountains, and when the Indian title to roam at will over the country lying between them is extinguished, then the solution of this most complicated question of Indian hostilities will be comparatively easy, for this belt of country will naturally fill up with our own people."28 With the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869, and the responsibility for Indian affairs shifted from the Army to the Interior Department in 1879, Sherman became convinced the Army's mission needed to change dramatically again, and he set out on the presidential tour to verify his position.

On Wednesday, September 1, the president and first lady left their home in Fremont, Ohio, and started their journey. They traveled to Cheyenne, Salt Lake City, Lake Tahoe, and Sacramento; from Sacramento to Portland and Walla Walla; from Walla Walla to Vancouver and Puget Sound, Washington Territory; from Puget Sound to Astoria, then San Francisco; and finally home through southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Kansas. The fifty-seven-year-old president was five feet, eight inches tall and weighed 190 pounds, and his chest-length beard was a mix of soft brown and gray.29 The Hayeses brought their sons Birchard Austin Hayes, age twenty-eight, and Rutherford Platt Hayes, age twenty-two, and the president's niece Laura Platt Mitchell on the trip. The two youngest Hayes children, Fanny, age thirteen, and Scott, age nine, stayed in Fremont in the care of their brother Webb, age twenty-four. The Hayeses were accompanied by the president's friend and former law partner John Herron and his wife Harriet. Dr. David Lowe Huntington, an army surgeon from the Soldiers' Home in Washington, D.C.,
also joined the party.\textsuperscript{28} Sherman, age sixty, who had celebrated his thirtieth wedding anniversary to his wife Ellen the previous May, brought along their daughter Rachel, age nineteen, and his mistress, Mary Audenreid, a widow in her thirties who had been married to Sherman’s long-time military aide, Maj. Joseph C. Audenreid.\textsuperscript{29}

The presidential group split in Sacramento. Ramsey, the Hayeses’ sons, and Sherman’s daughter and his mistress went to San Francisco, where on September 23, they boarded the steamship Columbia and sailed to Portland. The president, first lady, John Herron, Huntington, Jameson, and Sherman took the Central Pacific’s Oregon Division Railroad to its terminus in Redding. While planning the trip, Sherman urged the Hayeses to see Oregon’s Rogue River Valley, advising the president, “I made the trip two years ago . . . The scenery is simply sublime . . . It is a daily mail route, with good accommodations along the Road, really an old Settlers Country.”\textsuperscript{30}

That said, Sherman believed guiding just one stagecoach through southern Oregon was enough. On September 27, the president and first lady boarded an Oregon and California Stage Company stagecoach, driven by division agents W.L. Smith and Billy Carll, and left Redding for Ashland. In Oregon, Sherman’s task of protecting the president and first lady was particularly important. Serial stagecoach robber Charles “Black Bart” Bolles had robbed a stagecoach on the same route, one mile south of the Oregon border, on September 16; he would rob it again on November 20.\textsuperscript{31}

About two thousand people greeted the president’s stagecoach when it arrived in Ashland at 3:40 p.m. on September 27. Professor L.L. Rogers, president of Ashland College, gave a welcoming address, and fifty minutes later, Hayes was on his way to Jacksonville. The president arrived in Jacksonville, population 1,000, at 6:15 p.m. The town had not created a welcoming committee, but “a number of the citizens took it upon themselves to . . . escort them to the Hotel.” At the U.S. Hotel, run by Madam Jeanne DeRobaum, the group was served oysters from Yaquina Bay, salmon from the Columbia River, bear steak, and pumpkin pie. At 8:00 p.m., the president arrived at a reception at Holt’s Hall, where he spoke to the crowd for about twenty-five minutes, saying he had come to the West Coast to view the grand scenery and to cultivate a closer acquaintance with the people. He then introduced Sherman. “Judging from the immense quantities of fruit that he had seen since he came to Oregon, especially the monster plums, he thought a dense population could be supported here by this industry alone,” reported the local paper. “Almost every one present took advantage of the opportunity to shake hands with a live President. Gen. Sherman remarked afterwards, that this spontaneous, hearty greeting of the people was more acceptable to the President and himself than much useless formal ceremony.”\textsuperscript{32}

After a hurried breakfast the next morning, the presidential party was reboarding the stagecoach when DeRobaum called out

”The bill, the President’s bill!”

Mr. Herron, who acted as the President’s Secretary, returned — an open wallet in his hand. “How much is the total?” he demanded.

“One hundred dollars,” she told him.

“We don’t wish to buy your hotel,” he said with sarcasm, and he handed her twenty-five dollars in gold coins.\textsuperscript{33}

The informality of Hayes’s visit, and his lack of security, contrast vividly with Jacksonville’s next overnight presidential visit, when George W. Bush and his wife Laura arrived on Air Force One at the Medford Airport on Thursday, October 14, 2004, and spent the night at the Jacksonville Inn. Secret Service agents and White House staffers worked for two weeks preparing
the Jacksonville Inn for the presidential visit, said the inn’s owner, Linda Evans. “Evans said an agent told her more than 100 members of the Secret Service were working in Jacksonville to ensure the safety of all involved. She was asked to leave the cottage by 7 p.m. Wednesday so the Secret Service could do a final sweep.” White House staffers invited Central Point resident Lois Rodger, a volunteer trainer of assistance dogs, to meet the president and first lady at the tarmac, to “exemplify the president’s commitment to national volunteer service,” the Medford Mail Tribune reported. The only other contact the public had with Bush was a rally at the Jackson County Fairgrounds in Central Point. There, he told the crowd: “The last president to stay there in Jacksonville was Rutherford B. Hayes. I understand Rutherfordford complained about the tab. I’m not going to. We’re thrilled to be here.”

The Jackson County Republican Central Committee distributed sixteen thousand tickets to the event. The Tribune reported that “with all the extra police officers, plus public works and fire crews, the event took a hit on the city’s budget.” Security guards removed four people wearing shirts reading “Stop torture” or “Protect our civil liberties” from the event. At 8:00 p.m., Jackson County sheriff’s deputies and Oregon State Police in riot gear fired pepper balls at protesters when they refused to clear the street in front of the Jacksonville Inn.

But the 1880 presidential visit did not include such conflict. Hayes and his party spent the night of September 28 at the stagecoach company’s station at Grave Creek, managed by Billy Carll. Bright and early the next morning, the party headed north. At Canyonville, “carpenters from their benches and blacksmiths from their forges came forward to shake hands, coatless and hatless. All were treated alike. The rich and poor, the well-dressed and the plowmen in uniform came forward to shake hands.”

Nevertheless, the president’s visit to Oregon was not without controversy. A week before his arrival, the Roseburg Star had editorialized that it was “indignant that any Democrat should want to pay respect to President Hayes on his arrival in that town . . . we have too much respect for that office to bow to the man who occupies it by the infamous perjury of partisans. Democrats should turn out en masse, however, to take a long look at the monumental fraud of the world.” Nonetheless, a brass band was playing when the Hayes party arrived at 6:00 p.m. in Roseburg, the southern terminus of the Oregon and California Railroad. An official delegation, including Oregon governor William Wallace Thayer, future U.S. Senator Joseph N. Dolph, Portland mayor David P. Thompson, U.S. District Court of Oregon judge Matthew P. Deady, superintendent of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company George Ainsworth, and Henry Failing, president of the First National Bank in Portland, met the presidential party. Rachel Sherman, Audenreid, and Ramsey came south from Portland to rejoin the group. Oregon’s former governor and first U.S. senator, retired U.S. Army general Joseph Lane, gave a welcoming address.

After a reception at the Metropolitan Hotel, the Hayeses stayed at the home of William R. Willis, a local attorney, and his wife Caroline, who later remembered that Lucy Hayes “asked me to stay near her and repeat the names very distinctly as each lady drew near. But she really was a most delightful person. I found her much interested in our flowers and plants, both outside and in the greenhouse, and she had a real knowledge of them. She told me of varieties in the White House conservatories and jotted down names of some she admired here and would like to get a start of.”

At 9:30 a.m. the next day, the president’s train, its engine “fairly bristling with small flags,” pulled into the Eugene depot, which was decorated with evergreens and more flags. Several hundred people and the Eugene Brass Band, in full uniform, met the train. Hayes gave a short speech from the caboose, saying he had been warned about Oregon stagecoach robbers and its weather: “We were told of the rain and fogs said to always [be] prevalent in Oregon, but we have met none of these discomforts. The views beyond Mt. Shasta and the canyons were grand beyond description. Another source of our gratification was in the good and skilful care of our drivers, Mr. Smith and Carill [sic] who, like General Sherman, have nerve to go where they undertake to go. . . . This is an educational town I am told, and I congratulate you on your university which, I trust will have a great future.” Next, Ramsey addressed the crowd. They had just come from California, Ramsey said, and “they told the president that you were webfooled, that you had webs on your feet and no doubt he believed it. Now he can go back, go right to Washington and refute those false charges.” The crowd roared with laughter.

At 11:10 a.m., the party arrived in Albany for lunch. The Albany Ladies Coronet Band serenaded the president from a nearby balcony, then gave Lucy Hayes a wreath and complimented her on her good works on behalf of the temperance cause. “Our visit to this state has been a succession of surprises, agreeable surprises,” the president said at Albany. “I learned today for the first time that the ladies can play wind instruments even better than men.” The president then announced he was hungry for lunch, and the group headed to a local boardinghouse. There, according to Caroline Willis:

A good natured and efficient German woman was in charge of the seating arrangements in the dining room. When all were seated except the President who had been detained a few minutes, this woman stood guard over his vacant chair. When President Hayes finally came in, unattended and unheralded, and quietly took his place, the German woman, accustomed to the pomp of Emperor William, could not imagine this man in mere citizens’ garb could be the President. For several seconds she tried to stare him
out of the seat. Much perturbed she approached someone in authority and said, “I wish you vod go dell dot man to get oudda der president’s chair!”

The train continued to Salem, where legislators were arguing about how to greet the president. State senator Israel Haines, a Democrat from Baker, objected to spending taxpayers’ money to send a delegation to Roseburg to greet Hayes. The local newspaper summarized his argument:

It was rather curious to see all the principal officers of the nation traveling about this immense country and leaving the affairs of the government and the duties of their office to be attended to by their clerks. As a democrat he was hardly in a humor to encourage such doing. However, he would probably be as gracious as any member of the senate when the president arrived; but he hardly believed the state should pay the expenses of the committee who were going to receive the president.

The president stayed in Salem for ninety minutes and tried to address a joint session of the legislature. The capitol was so noisy that he suggested they move outside, where five thousand people had gathered. Again, Hayes tried to give a speech, but the crowd was so loud he gave up. First-term representative (and future governor) Theodore Thurston Geer, a Republican from Marion, remembered:

The humdrum of ordinary legislation was relieved during the latter part of the session of 1880 by a reception given one afternoon to President Hayes and General W.T. Sherman, who were touring the Pacific coast. Both houses met in joint convention and were addressed by the President and the hero of the great March to the Sea. It was the first time a President of the United States had ever been in Oregon and it was justly counted a great event, but it was plain that the enthusiasm aroused by the presence of the great military commander surpassed that felt on account of the visit of the President, though his reception was cordial in every respect. . . .

On that occasion there was much admiration expressed for Mrs. Hayes, as there was, indeed, wherever she was known. Her democratic manner, together with her exceeding simplicity of dress, was a matter of general comment. It was commonly remarked, I remember, that of the many hundreds of women who attended the reception, the President’s wife was without doubt the least expensively dressed. Mrs. Hayes was an American woman with that best of womanly endowments — common sense!

On the way north from Salem, the group stopped in Aurora Colony, a Christian communal society of six hundred people, mostly Swiss and German immigrants, where “President Hayes won the hearts of the Germans at Aurora by greeting them in their mother tongue,” before continuing north.

The Hayeses arrived in Portland at 5:00 p.m. and rode in an open barouche to the Esmond Hotel, where they checked into Suite 4, facing Morrison and Front streets. The sunburned president made a short speech from the Esmond’s second-floor balcony to five thousand people in the street.

As a surprise for the presidential couple, a portrait of Sardis Birchard, the president’s maternal uncle, for whom the president (Rutherford Birchard Hayes) was named, hung in the suite’s boudoir. The portrait was loaned for the occasion by an old schoolmate of Hayes who had moved to Portland. After four days of stagecoach and train travel, the presidential party’s first order of business was to send out its laundry — $13.75 worth of washing.

Until 1906, presidents had paid travel expenses out of their own pockets. Hayes’s expense account, kept by Colonel Jameson, shows the trip cost the Hayeses $575.40. The president often saved money by staying at private homes and military installations, including Vancouver Barracks across the Columbia River from Portland, and by taking advantage of the railroads’ “free pass system,” which allowed elected officials to ride for free. Sherman, who was on active duty, received an eight-cent-a-mile travel reimbursement for the trip.

October 1 started with a reminder to the Hayeses that their safety was not assured. At 9:30 a.m., on the street under their window, Moses May, rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Portland, got into a gunfight with the synagogue’s president, Abraham Waldman. May shot and injured Waldman and a bystander. Not to be deterred, the president left an hour later to tour Pioneer Courthouse, where the post office and custom house had office, and called on Deady in chambers.

Col. John Jameson traveled with the presidential party and kept this expense account.
That afternoon, the Hayeses left their hotel to visit schools, emphasizing the president's goal of "warning of the evils of popular illiteracy." They first went to Harrison Street School, then Park School, then Central School, where Mayor Thompson's daughter Daisy presented the president with a basket of flowers, and finally to North School. At Harrison Street School, the president told the children: "My friend on the left, with all the buttons, is Gen. Sherman. You've heard 'Marching Through Georgia' and if you don't know it your teachers should teach it to you; and when you sing it, you'll remember you have seen the General."10

That evening, more than nine thousand people attended a reception in the Hayeses' honor at the Mechanics' Pavilion. There, "the jam was so inconsiderate and precipitate . . . that four ladies fainted outright and had to be carried to the street to be revived. One man was lifted fully three feet by the crowd and held in that position for five minutes."11 Hayes praised the crowd:

You are citizens of the state of Oregon, a state destined to be an agricultural state, a commercial state, a manufacturing state. You have all the means convenient to you each one of these three important parts of a great community. In manufacturing you have of course not made great progress. I see in the lumber yards and work shops of this city evidences that you have already laid the foundation for this branch of industry. A state that possesses the water power of Oregon can not fail in this particular. Already ships from every important part of the globe find their way to Portland. Agriculturally, you are able not only to feed yourselves, but have a large surplus for foreign nations. . . . Standing today in the cupola of the custom house where I could see all parts of the city, I must confess my amazement and surprise . . . at the thought that you had accomplished what had taken other cities one hundred years in less than a quarter of a century.12

On October 2, the president and first lady visited the Government Indian School in Forest Grove. There, he tackled his goal of warning against "race prejudice" head-on, stating his firm belief in a policy of assimilation for Indians.13 In a speech printed on the front page of the New York Times, Hayes said:

The party with me and myself, have been gratified at much we have seen of Oregon. Especially have we been gratified at what we have seen of the educational institutions of the state. As for this Indian School, I think it is the feeling of every good citizen, that it is wise and just to make good citizens of these Indian boys and girls. Some persons think that God has decreed that they should die off like wild animals. With that we have nothing to do. If this is so — if they are to become extinct — we ought to leave that to Providence, and we, as good, patriotic, Christian people, should do our best to improve their physical, mental and moral condition. We should prepare them to become part of the great, American family. If it turns out that their destiny is to be different, we shall at least have done our duty. This country was once theirs. They owned it as much as you own your farms. We have displaced them and are now completing that work. I am glad that Oregon has taken a step in the right direction. I am glad that she is preparing Indian boys and girls to become good, law-abiding citizens.14

Later, the president and first lady wrote to their youngest children, Fanny and Scott, how surprised they were that the lone Indian boy from Alaska at the school looked so different from the other Indian children.15 Of all his accomplishments in office, Hayes was particularly proud of the changes he made in Indian policy. In his April 11, 1880, diary entry, he congratulated himself on facilitating "an Indian policy of justice and fidelity to engagements and placing the Indians on the footing of citizens."

On October 4, the president celebrated his fifty-eighth birthday on the steamer Wide West, which officers had decorated with bunting and festoons of sagebrush, and headed to The Dalles and Umatilla. Deady and Failing accompanied the group. All along the riverbank, crowds waved and cheered. At the Cascade Canal works, the president received a salute of 37 resounding blasts set off in quick succession by the workmen at the locks. . . . Major Powell, in charge of the Cascade canal work, invited Mr. Hayes and his party to visit the works. Mr. Hayes seemed much interested, and asked many questions about the proposed improvement and as to its effect on the river, commerce and the interests of eastern Oregon.16 When the presidential party reached The Dalles, it transferred to a train, and the president gave a short speech from the caboose. The party then headed to the mouth of the John Day River, where it boarded the Harvest Queen and headed for Umatilla.17 Seven miles above The Dalles, the President's train stopped and the party walked to The Narrows, a spot where waters of the Columbia River surged between walls of solid rock. The group had an impromptu rock-throwing contest. No one managed to throw a rock across the river, "the President, however, making the best throw by several feet."18
The presidential party traveled on the Harvest Queen to Umatilla. According to the New York Times, the steamer’s captain, James W. Troop, broke out his harmonica, and “under the leadership of Mrs. Hayes, the party formed a choir and spent two or more hours in concert” (October 6, 1880).

At 8:00 a.m. October 5, the presidential party’s boat berthed in Umatilla and went to Walla Walla, Washington Territory. Sherman was keen to inspect Fort Walla Walla, and five lines of cavalry lined up there to welcome the group. At the train depot, Washington Territorial Judge S.C. Wingard introduced the president, who reiterated his primary goal for the trip: to use a presidential visit to promote national harmony and prevent regional alienation.

We came together because we agree on some of those common sentiments and ideas which tend to make, and which do make us Americans, and give us national fellow feeling. You come not to see any mere individual. As a mere individual you care nothing for me, and in addressing you, I do it in the sense of representing our nationality and our flag. As such representative I am glad to greet you to-day and I am glad to be greeting by you. I trust our meeting will contribute something toward the increase of that sentiment of patriotism which makes you free men in the full sense of American citizenship. The better we know each other the more we become attached to each other. All of sectional animosity and all of bitterness that there may be between a people living widely apart disappears as we come together and meet each other face to face, and shake each other’s hands.36

Once again Hayes, who was not running for office nor ever would again, stressed to listeners that he was there as a symbol of the federal government, a personification of the federal government’s caring and concern for the Pacific Northwest, and shared his hopes that citizens in the region would feel they were full partners, in every sense, of the union.

At a reception back in The Dalles on October 6, Winifred Robinson presented the first lady with a basket of Oregon apples. “She looked at the fruit with amazement, and thought they must be waxwork. She was assured that they were apples grown around this country, where General Sherman said he didn’t know how men made a living. On entering the carriage she was very careful that she had her basket of fruit with her.”37 While Lucy Hayes was charming the locals, Sherman, who had never excelled at public relations, was not. Deady noted in his diary that while the president and his wife “are sensible good people who have made a very favorable impression . . . Sherman is more angular, abrupt and dogmatic, and although he persists in talking whenever called for cannot speak.” The general, Deady continued, was “ tiresome and fulsome without a particle of grace of manner.”38

The party returned to Vancouver Barracks on October 7, and Hayes toured Vancouver’s Chinatown the next day. On October 9, the group took a train to Puget Sound and spent the next week in Washington Territory.39 Washington Territorial Governor Elisha Ferry and his wife Sarah joined the group as it headed to Port Townsend on October 12. The Port Townsend Puget Sound Argus reported that the presidential party, including Brig. Gen. Oliver O. Howard, commander of the Department of the Columbia, “went to Port Townsend where they had a military reception in grand style . . . when they left on Wednesday they were loudly cheered by the assembled crowd. The President responded by saying, ‘We have had a very pleasant visit, and we go away with very agreeable impressions.’” The Argus added, “We have not space for the substance of the speeches made, but hope to comment on them further in our next issue.” It did not realize that hope.40

On October 15, in the edition reporting on Hayes’s visit to Port Townsend, the Argus printed an editorial expressing the territory’s impatience with Congress for withholding statehood status. “It is in the power of the Democratic party to lift us into statehood at any time, their majority in Congress enabling them to do so. They know very well that in keeping Washington a Territory they prevent [presidential candidate] Mr. Garfield getting three electoral votes for President, and they know also that they thus keep out of Congress two Republican Senators and one Representative. . . . Statehood is exceedingly desirable to our people.”41 Nonetheless, in none of the Washington Territory newspaper reports, or in the copies of Hayes’s speeches, is there any record of the president addressing Washington’s petition for statehood. Congress did not grant it until 1889.

At 5:30 a.m. October 15, the presidential party left Tacoma by train and travelled to Kalama, Washington Territory, where it boarded the steamer Wide West and headed down the Columbia River. After fog forced a one-hour layover in Cathlamet, the president arrived in Astoria at 11:30 a.m.42 The
Astoria's mayor, DeWitt Clinton Ireland, who was also the editor and publisher of the *Daily Astorian*, reported in the newspaper: “Most of the town's bands were playing as the *Wide West* pulled up to the dock. Unfortunately, each of them was playing a different tune but it didn’t make too much difference because nobody could hear them over the shouts and cheers of the crowd. . . . As President Hayes and I walked through this charming aisle, the children were sweetly singing, 'America' and throwing flowers into the street in front of us. I noticed that the President was walking carefully over this garlanded street and he remarked that he was sometimes compelled to walk upon flowers, but that he always endeavored not to step on them.”

After resting at the Occident Hotel, Hayes, Sherman, and Ramsey inspected Fort Canby in Washington Territory and Fort Stevens. When the group arrived at Fort Stevens 3:00 p.m., it was given a twenty-one-gun salute, but only one officer, First Lt. William Everett, Fourth Artillery, was on hand to greet the president. The few enlisted men with Everett were not in full uniform. Immediately after the one-hour inspection, Sherman filed a complaint. The following day, Everett wrote a letter to the Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Columbia, defending the poor showing: “I as post commander gave permission for all of the command except the guard prisoners and a detail to fire a salute in honor of his excellency the President, to visit *Astoria* in order to see the President there. The enlisted men seen on the hill where the President and party passed were of the same detail that fired the salute and were probably imbued with the same curiosity [sic] as other people.”

That night, the president and first lady dined at the Occident Hotel on baked Chinook salmon, oysters, and dessert with fresh berries from local gardens. Astoria’s mayor asked if he could make a few remarks, but Lucy Hayes, who had been on the road for forty-five days, traveled on boats “festooned” in sagebrush, been served bear, toured a coal mine, narrowly missed a gunshot in the streets of Portland, and heard “Hail to the Chief” over and over again, was weary. According to the *Daily Astorian*, the mayor “was interrupted by Mrs. Hayes, with the suggestion that where there was such good cooking speeches were unnecessary. That ended the matter, and no public addresses nor toasts were offered.” The *Daily Astorian* article, which ran without a byline, probably was written by the mayor himself. Ireland, in both of his capacities as mayor and publisher, was a vociferous critic of Chinese immigration, but neither his newspaper reports nor his memoirs written thirty years later indicate he and Hayes discussed Chinese immigration.

October 16 was a beautiful, sunny day that Hayes later interpreted as an omen. The presidential party boarded the *Columbia* for a three-day cruise to San Francisco. From there, the Hayeses travelled to Yosemite, not yet a national park, then to Los Angeles and Tucson. In New Mexico, they rode for two days in U.S. Army field ambulances to Santa Fe, through Apache territory, with a military escort. The president skipped a planned stop in Denver to be home in Fremont in time to vote for his successor.

Hayes returned to the White House on November 6 and resumed daily entries in his diary the next day. “We left W [Washington, D.C.] on our Pacific tour Thursday evening 26th August and returned Saturday morning after an absence of Seventy one days. Our trip was most fortunate in all of its circumstances. Superb weather, good health and no accidents. A most gratifying reception greeted us everywhere from the people and from the noted and interesting individuals.” The president made a list of people to send thank-you notes to, including Portland mayor D.P. Thompson, Henry Failing (with the notation “Hill, artist”), and stagecoach drivers Smith and Carll.

In Oregon, the most tangible result of Hayes’s visit was the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' improvements to the mouth of the Columbia River. While visiting Astoria, Hayes “appeared to take special interest in the improvements needed at the mouth of the Columbia . . . especially to the improvements needed at the bar and the great benefits to our state and Washington territory to be derived from it.” In his final state of the union address, Hayes told Congress about the necessary work. In August 1882, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ surveyors examined the estuary, interviewed river pilots, and recommended that the federal government dredge the mouth of the river and build a jetty. Congress appropriated $100,000 for the operation on July 5, 1884, and work on a 1,000-foot jetty, west toward the Clatsop Spit, began in April 1885.

In the same address, Hayes spoke of the Indian boarding school in Forest Grove, calling for Congress to support “an increase of appropriations” for boarding schools for Indian children, such as the one “established this year in Forest Grove, Oregon for the education of Indian youth on the Pacific Coast . . . . The expenses of Indian education have so far been drawn from the permanent civilization fund at the disposal of the Department of the Interior, but the fund is now so much reduced that the continuance of this beneficial work will in the future depend on specific appropriations by Congress for that purpose; and I venture to express the hope that Congress will not permit institutions so fruitful of good results to perish for want of means for their support. On the contrary, any increase of the number of such schools appears to be highly advisable.” Two years later, 71 federally funded Indian boarding schools were in operation, with an enrollment...
of 2,755 students; by 1887, 117 federal boarding schools were serving 8,020 students. In 1885, Forest Grove Indian Training School was moved to Salem and renamed the Chemawa Indian Industrial School. It had 36 employees, 205 students, and an annual budget of $40,747.71 in 1887.26

The president’s next recommendation, that the U.S. Army be reorganized, was implemented. Sherman, in his 1880 annual report, had advised Congress that “the West’s many small military posts had become useless. The railroads have completely revolutionized our country in the past few years, and impose on the military an entire change of policy. The maintenance of small posts along wagon and stage routes is no longer necessary,” and the posts should be abandoned, he said.27 Hayes concurred. In November 1883, Sherman retired and turned command of the U.S. Army over to General Philip Sheridan, who recommended that the military organization in the West be reorganized and reduced. Within a decade, the army had decommissioned more than twenty-eight army posts west of the Mississippi River.28

Hayes’s primary goal, for both his western tour and his presidency, was to reunify the country by seeking a “union of people’s hearts by works of love and peace.” It is difficult to quantify how his visit to Oregon achieved that purpose, just as it is difficult to quantify the results of Washington’s and Madison’s presidential tours. But there is much anecdotal evidence to suggest Hayes’s visit strengthened Oregons’ ties to the federal government.

The Daily Oregonian, for example, editorialized: “The appearance among us of a president of the United States is a notable event. Only a small proportion of our people had ever seen one . . . it serves a good purpose for the president to mingle with the people. It tends to preserve an easy intercourse between them and the persons highest in authority, and this plays no small part in maintaining the proper simplicity of our republican format.”29 Hayes’s visit was “an event long to be remembered in The Dalles,” the Daily Astorian reported. “All attempted to give the president and his party a cordial and hearty welcome, and by doing so to attest their appreciation of his administration and their loyalty to the national government.”30 When Hayes died, his New York Times obituary said he succeeded at his primary goal of unifying the country: “There is no doubt that his Administrations served a very useful purpose in the transition from sectional antagonism to national harmony.”31

Hayes’s time in Astoria also washed away any second thoughts he might have had about keeping his pledge, made when he accepted his party’s nomination to the presidency, not to seek a second term. On January 2, 1881, two months before he left office, the president told Texas congressman Guy M. Bryan he did not regret leaving the presidency. The beautiful day he left Astoria, Hayes wrote, seemed an omen about the wisdom of setting a new direction for his life: “We begin to long for home and freedom more and more as the time draws nearer . . . about the middle of October last, one fine morning as we were passing on the noble steamer Columbia out of the Columbia River into the Pacific Ocean, we passed a beautiful ship The Valiant from Boston. She turned northward towards Puget Sound and we headed southward for the Golden Gate. It impressed me deeply.”32

NOTES

The author thanks Nan Card, Curator of Manuscripts, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, Professor Emeritus Duncan McDonald, and University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication, for his pioneering work educating journalists in information gathering.

5. The meetings were held at the Wormley Hotel in Washington, D.C.
7. Congressional Record, 254.
9. Rutherford B. Hayes Papers [hereafter Hayes Papers], Notes and Speeches, Inaugural Address, March 5, 1877, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, Fremont, Ohio [hereafter Hayes Center]. See also Woodward, Reunion and Reconstruction, 25.
12. Ellis, Presidential Travel, 240.
14. Washington Post, August 26, 1880. The Post refers here to the date Hayes left the White House.
17. The 1880 U.S. Census was the first to use “Indian” as a race classification.
18. Davison, Presidency, chapters 12 and 13; Hayes, State of the Union Addresses, 1878 and 1880.
20. Henry E. Fritz, The Movement for Indian
26. Hayes Papers, Notes and Speeches, State of the Union Address, December 6, 1880, Hayes Center; At hearn, Sherman, 268, 186.
30. Hayes Papers, Incoming Correspondence, William T. Sherman to Rutherford B. Hayes, August 20, 1880, Hayes Center.
34. Medford Mail Tribune, October 12, 13, 14, 15, 2004.
35. The (Jacksonville, Oregon) Democratic Times, October 1, 1880, 2. The bed Hayes slept on is displayed at the Applegate Trail Interpretive Center in Sunny Valley.
40. The Eugene City Guard, October 2, 1880.
41. Morning Oregonian, October 1, 1880.
42. Northrup, Portland Bulletin, October 1, 1880.
43. Morning Oregonian, October 1, 1880; Pogue, “Roseburg, Oregon: Hostess City,” 146.
44. Daily Astorian, September 22, 1880.
47. Northrup, Portland Bulletin, October
1, 1880, 3; Hayes Papers, Incoming Correspondence, Col. John Jameson, His Excellency R.B. Hayes, In Account with John Jameson (expense report), Hayes Center.
51. Daily Astorian, October 10, 1880.
52. Morning Oregonian, October 2, 1880; copy of speech, Hayes Papers, Notes and Speeches, “Presidential Western Tour, Mechanics Pavilion, Portland, Oregon, October 1, 1880,” Hayes Center.
53. Hayes Papers, Notes and Speeches, “Presidential Western Tour, Forest Grove, Oregon, October 2, 1880,” Hayes Center.
54. New York Times, October 3, 1880; Charles Richard Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes, Nineteenth President of the United States (Columbus: The Ohio State Archæological and Historical Society, 1924), 397.
55. Geer, First Lady, 227.
56. Washington Post, October 6, 1880.
57. Deady, Pharis te, 322–23.
60. Hayes Papers, Notes and Speeches, Walla Walla, Washington Territory, October 5, 1880, Hayes Center.
62. Deady, Pharis te, 323.
63. New York Times, October 9, 1880.
64. Portland Town send Puget Sound Argus, October 15 and 22, 1880.
66. The map in Davison, Presidency, 214, inaccurately shows that Hayes traveled from Tacoma to Astoria via the Pacific Ocean.
68. Daily Astorian, October 17, 1880.
69. See Daily Astorian, September 10, 1880.
70. Davison, Presidency, 242.
71. Hayes, Diary, November 7, 1880. The notation “Hill, artist” probably refers to Hood River artist Edward Hill, whose paintings, among them a view of Mount Hood at sunset, decorated the Hayes’ suite at the Esmond Hotel.
72. Daily Astorian, October 14, 1880.
73. Hayes, State of the Union Address, 1880.
75. Hayes, State of the Union Address, 1880.
79. Daily Oregonian, October 1, 1880.
80. Daily Astorian, October 15, 1880.