

A COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY
OF
MULTNOMAH, OREGON
BY
ROSS C. B. THORNTON

1931

Survey of Public Health of Multnomah, Oregon.

Multnomah Station, Oregon is a semi rural, suburban settlement located to the south and somewhat to the west of the City of Portland, in Oregon. It is a relatively young settlement having had most of its growth in the past fifteen years. This community has built up around an inter urban railway station; extending peripherally in all directions, thus the territory colloquially spoken of as Multnomah is ever increasing in area. The people residing in this district have never felt an urgent impulse toward local self government so are still under a government consisting of state and county agencies. The limits of the community are therefore very elastic and subject to great variation from time to time and to local or personal opinion.

The population is entirely white there being representatives of every nationality of the white race. Perhaps the majority of the population is of Scandinavian or Swiss extraction

The population is not subject to seasonal variation and a non resident population does not exist.

The original area designated Multnomah was about one fourth of a square mile, the area now popularly called Multnomah is about seven or eight square miles. Of this latter area perhaps seventy-five percent is built up or improved but since the individual properties vary from one fourth of an acre to ten acres the residences are rather widely separated and there appears to be much unimproved ground.

The community is essentially a residential one, however many of the residents raise poultry, rabbits or flower bulbs. There are no local industries except for the stores shops and dairies. The majority of the population are home owning or home purchasing wage earners who commute to Portland to pursue their particular line of endeavor in earning a livelihood. A very few of the residents are comfortably fixed financially but none are well to do. There are but very few who are indigent.

As stated above there is no form of local self government

and the district is therefore governed by the laws of the state only. Taxes are levied by the state and county on the value as assessed by the assessor of Multnomah County.

The business men of the community have loosely organized in such a manner that they protect the commercial interests and at the same time act as something of a boosters club.

There are no local organizations which carry on any line of endeavor which could be interpreted as public health activities.

Health Departments.

The community, being under the jurisdiction of state and county governmental agencies, looks to these agencies for all regulations pertaining to the general health of the community. Medical attention is furnished by two physicians, each of which resides in the district, and by various physicians practicing in Portland. Thus the local health protection is derived primarily from the physicians who attend the people living in the community.

Non Official Health Agencies.

Aside from nurse from the County Visiting Nurses Association, the school nurse and the local and the adjacent urban physicians there are no non official organizations particularly interested in the health problems of the community. During 1927 a small group of individuals made an honest and worth while attempt to develop a local sewer project. The efforts of this group led to such a dismal failure that no one cares to undertake the project again.

The water supply is purchased from the city of Portland. Garbage is disposed of by garbage collectors who ply their trade both in and out of the city. It is readily noted then that the public health agencies of Portland act more or less unintentionally and non-officially in safe guarding the general health of the community.

6 Health Department Activities.

The health officer having jurisdiction over this community is the Health Officer of Multnomah County. It is evident, therefore, that it is impossible to approximate the number of officers involved and the expenditures of either time or money on the supervision of the health of this small portion of Multnomah County.

Vital Statistics, Births Deaths etc.

Births and deaths cannot be reported in numerical values since many of the people of the community go into Portland to the hospitals. Births and deaths are then recorded as having occurred in Portland, the certificate giving the permanent address, however. Yet, because of the indefinite boundaries of the community distort any statistics one might compile.

WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK. THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD

N. B.—In case of more than one child at birth, a SEPARATE RETURN must be made for each, and the number of each, in order of birth stated. This certificate must be filed by the attending physician or midwife with the local registrar within 10 days after birth.

POSTOFFICE ADDRESS OF MOTHER

1234 ABC, Multnomah Oregon

Oregon State Board of Health
Division of Vital Statistics

Certificate of Birth

State Registered No.

Local Registered No.

1. Place of Birth

County

Multnomah

State

Oregon.

Township

Portland

or Village

Multnomah Station

City

No. 1234 - ABC

St.

Ward

(If birth occurred in a hospital or institution, give its name instead of street and number)

(If in country, give distance and direction from nearest town)

If child is not yet named, make supplemental report as directed

2. Full name of child

John Doe.

3. Sex of child

Male

To be answered ONLY in event of plural births.

4. Twin, triplet or other

5. Number in order of birth

6. Premature

Full term

7. Legiti-

mate?

Yes

8. Date of birth

3-1-31

(Month, day, year)

9. Full name

FATHER

James Doe.

18. Full maiden name

MOTHER

Martha Roe

10. Residence

(Usual place of abode)

If nonresident, give place and state

1234 ABC St.

11. Color or race

White

12. Age at last birthday 26 (years)

13. Birthplace (city or place)

Portland

(State or country) Oregon

14. Trade, profession or particular kind of work done, as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc.

Truck driver.

15. Industry or business in which work was done, as silk mill, sawmill, bank, etc.

Express Co.

16. Date (month and year) last engaged in this work

February, 1931

17. Total time (years) spent in this work

6

27. Number of children of this mother

(Taken as of time of birth of child herein certified and including this child)

Were precautions taken against ophthalmia neonatorum?

(a) Born alive and now living

(b) Born alive but now dead

(c) Stillborn

Yes

0

0

Occupation

23. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as housekeeper, typist, nurse, clerk, etc.

Housekeeper.

24. Industry or business in which work was done, as own home, lawyer's office, silk mill, etc.

own home.

25. Date (month and year) last engaged in this work

February, 1931

26. Total time (years) spent in this work

1 1/2 yrs.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE *

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was born alive at

5:33 A.M.

m.

* When there was no attending physician or midwife, then the father, householder, etc., should make this return. A stillborn child is one that neither breathes nor shows other evidence of life after birth.

Give name added from a supplemental report

Signature

Richard Roe M.D.

Portland, Oregon

(Physician or midwife)

(Month, day, year)

Address

Filed

19

Registrar.

UNITED STATES STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

Why births should be registered—There is hardly a relation of life, social, legal, or economic, in which the evidence furnished by an accurate registration of births may not prove to be of the greatest value, not only to the individual but also to the public at large. It is not only an act of civilization to register birth certificates but good business, for they are frequently used in many practical ways, some of which are listed below:

- (1) As evidence to prove the age and legitimacy of heirs;
- (2) As proof of age to determine the validity of a contract entered into by an alleged minor;
- (3) As evidence to establish age and proof of citizenship and descent in order to vote;
- (4) As evidence to establish the right of admission to the professions and to many public offices;
- (5) As evidence of legal age to marry;
- (6) As evidence to prove the claims of widows and orphans under the widows' and orphans' pension law;
- (7) As evidence to determine the liability of parents for the debts of a minor;
- (8) As evidence in the administration of estates, the settlement of insurance and pensions;
- (9) As evidence to prove the irresponsibility of children under legal age for crime and misdemeanor, and various other matters in the criminal code;
- (10) As evidence in the enforcement of law relating to education and to child labor;
- (11) As evidence to determine the relations of guardians and wards;
- (12) As proof of citizenship in order to obtain a passport;
- (13) As evidence in the claim for exemption from or the right to jury and military service.

Statement of occupation—Make some entry in this section for each parent. For a woman whose only occupation is that of home housework, write "housework" in answer to question 23 and "own home" in answer to question 24. For a person engaged in domestic service for wages, however, designate the occupation by the appropriate terms, as "housekeeper—private family," "cook—hotel," etc. For a person who has no occupation whatever write "none."

To be complete, an occupation return must state:

- (14) and (23) The trade, profession, or particular kind of work done.
- (15) and (24) The industry or business in which the work is done.
- (16) and (25) The month and year the person last worked at the occupation.
- (17) and (26) The number of years the person followed the occupation.

In stating the occupation, avoid the use of such indefinite terms as "employe," "worker," "operative," etc. Find out the particular kind of work done and return that, as "spinner," "weaver," etc.

In stating the industry or business, avoid the use of such general terms as "store," "factory," "mill," etc. State the particular kind of store, factory, mill, etc., as "grocery store," "soap factory," "cotton mill," etc.

Distinguish carefully the different kinds of engineers by stating the full descriptive titles, as "civil engineer," "mechanical engineer," "mining engineer," "stationary engineer," etc. Avoid the term "laborer" when a more precise statement of occupation can be secured. Do not use the word "mechanic," but give the exact occupation, as "carpenter," "painter," "machinist," etc. Distinguish carefully between "retail merchants" and "wholesale merchants." A person who sells goods should be called a "salesman" and not a "clerk."

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

N. B.—In case of twin or triplet stillbirths, a separate certificate must be made for each stillbirth.

WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK - - THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD

1. PLACE OF STILLBIRTH
 County of Multnomah
 Township or Village of Multnomah Station
 or
 City of Portland.
 Street and Number. No. 1234 ABC St.

STATE OF OREGON

State Board of Health - Division of Vital Statistics

CERTIFICATE OF STILLBIRTH

State Registered No.

Local Registered No.

St.; Ward Hospital
(If stillbirth occurred in hospital or institution, give its name instead of street and number)

2. NAME OF CHILD John Doe.
 3. Sex of Child Male. 4. Twin, triplet, or other? _____
 Number in order of birth _____
 (To be answered only in event of plural births)

5. Date of stillbirth March 1, 1931
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

FATHER
 6. Full Name James Doe.
 7. Residence P. O. 1234 ABC St Portland, Ore..
 8. Color or Race white. 9. Age at last birthday 26 Years.
 10. Birthplace (State or Country) Portland Oregon.
 11. Occupation Truck driver.

MOTHER
 12. Full Maiden Name Martha Roe.
 13. Residence P. O. 1234 ABC. St Portland, Ore..
 14. Color or Race White. 15. Age at last birthday 23 Years.
 16. Birthplace (State or Country) Portland Oregon.
 17. Occupation housewife.

18. Number of children of this mother, born alive and now living 0 19. Number of children of this mother, born alive but now dead 0 19a. Number of children of this mother, stillborn, not including this child 0

20. Signature of informant Richard Roe M.D. 21. Address Portland Oregon.

INFORMANT

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE
 22. I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, which was born dead March 1, 1931, 5:33 AM
 (Month) (Day) (Year) (Hour)
 23. Period of utero-gestation 9 (Months)
 24. Cause of stillbirth Fetal asphyxiation.
 25. Signature of attendant Richard Roe M. D. Midwife 26. Address Portland, Ore.

CERTIFICATE OF UNDERTAKER

27. Place of burial or removal 28. Date of burial , 192, 192 (Month) (Day) (Year)
 (Day) (Year)
 29. Signature of Undertaker 30. Address of Undertaker
 31. Date filed , 192, 32, Registrar

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

N. B.—WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, so that it may be properly classified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. See instructions on back of certificate.

Oregon State Board of Health

Certificate of Death

1. PLACE OF DEATH

County MultnomahState Oregon

State Registered No. _____

Township _____

City ONo. 1234

or Village _____

ABC. St.

Local Registered No. _____

or

Length of residence in city or town where death occurred

yrs.

mos.

ds.

How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.

2. FULL NAME John Doe.(a) Residence: No. 1234, ABC

St., _____

(If nonresident, give city or town and state)

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3. SEX Male4. COLOR OR RACE white

5. Single, Married, Widowed or divorced (write the word)

single5a. If married, widowed, or divorced
HUSBAND of _____
(or) WIFE of _____6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, and year) March 1 1910

7. AGE

Years 21Months 0Days 0If less than
1 day, ___ hrs.
or ___ min.

OCCUPATION

8. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc.

Truck driver.

9. Industry or business in which work was done, as silk mill, sawmill, bank, etc.

Express Co.

10. Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year)

Feb 1931

11. Total time (years) spent in this occupation

212. BIRTHPLACE (city or town)
(State or country)Multnomah Station
Oregon

FATHER

13. NAME James Doe.Portland O14. BIRTHPLACE (city or town)
(State or country)Oregon

MOTHER

15. MAIDEN NAME Martha Rose.Portland16. BIRTHPLACE (city or town)
(State or country)Oregon17. INFORMANT James Doe

(Address)

1234 ABC St.

18. BURIAL, CREMATION OR REMOVAL

Place _____

Date _____, 19____

19. UNDERTAKER Richard Roe.

(Address)

20. Filed _____, 19____

Registrar

State Registered No. _____

Local Registered No. _____

or Village Multnomah Station. St., _____ Ward

(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its name instead of street number)

Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. ds. How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

21. DATE OF DEATH (month, day, and year) March 1 . 193122. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from Feb 20, 1931, to March 1, 1931, that I last saw him alive on March 1, 1931; death is said to have occurred on the date stated above, at 5:33 Am.

The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in order or onset were as follows:

Lobar pneumoniaDate of onset
Feb 20 1931

Contributory causes of importance not related to principal cause:

None.Name of operation None Date of _____What test confirmed diagnosis? _____ Was there an autopsy? Yes

23. If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in also the following:

Accident, suicide, or homicide? _____ Date of injury _____, 19_____

Where did injury occur? _____

(Specify city or town, county, and state)

Specify whether injury occurred in industry, in home, or in public place.

Manner of injury _____

Nature of injury _____

24. Was disease or injury in any way related to occupation of deceased?

No If so, specify _____(Signed) Richard Roe. M. D.(Address) Multnomah StationOregon

UNITED STATES STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Statement of occupation—Precise statement of occupation is very important, so that the relative healthfulness of various pursuits can be known. Make some entry in this section for every person aged 10 years or over. If the occupation had been given up or changed on account of the disease causing death, report the occupation prior to illness. If the deceased had retired from business, report the occupation prior to retirement. Children not gainfully employed may be returned as *at school* or *at home*. For a woman whose only occupation was that of home housework, write *housework* in answer to Question 8 and *own home* in answer to Question 9. For a person engaged in domestic service for wages, however, designate the occupation by the appropriate terms, as *housekeeper—private family, cook—hotel, etc.* For a person who had no occupation whatever write *none*.

To be complete, an occupation return must state:

8. The trade, profession, or particular kind of work done.
9. The industry or business in which the work was done.
10. The month and year the deceased last worked at the occupation.
11. The number of years the deceased followed the occupation.

In stating the occupation, avoid the use of such indefinite terms as "employe," "worker," "operative," etc. Find out the particular kind of work done and return that, as *spinner, weaver, etc.*

In stating the industry or business, avoid the use of such general terms as "store," "factory," "mill," etc. State the particular kind of store, factory, mill, etc., as *grocery store, soap factory, cotton mill, etc.*

Distinguish carefully the different kind of engineers by stating the full descriptive titles, as *civil engineer, mechanical engineer, mining engineer, stationary engineer, etc.* Avoid the term "laborer" when a more precise statement of the occupation can be secured. Do not use the word "mechanic," but give the exact occupation, as *carpenter, painter, machinist, etc.* Distinguish carefully between *retail merchants* and *wholesale merchants*. A person who sells goods should be called a *salesman* and not a *clerk*.

Statement of cause of death—Cause of death means the disease, injury, or complication which causes death, *not* the mode of dying, e. g., heart failure, asphyxia, asthenia, etc. As principal cause name the disease or injury causing death. As related causes, name earlier morbid conditions, if any, related to the principal cause and any important complication of the principal cause. Under contributory causes of importance not related to principal cause, name other important diseases or injuries. Examples:

Example I

The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in order of onset were Date of onset as follows:

Arteriosclerosis	1915
Chronic interstitial nephritis	1921
Cerebral hemorrhage	July 5, 1927

Contributory causes of importance not related to principal cause:

Fracture of arm	
Automobile accident	May 3, 1927

Example II

The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in order of onset were Date of onset as follows:

Attack of epilepsy	1 week ago
Run over by street car	1 week ago
Peritonitis	3 days ago

Contributory causes of importance not related to principal cause:

Influenza	6 weeks ago

In a group of causes containing the principal cause and related causes, the causes should be given in the order of onset, so that in a group of three causes the principal cause may appear in either first, second, or third position. The principal cause in each of the above examples happens to be the second cause given.

Additional Space for Further Statements by Physician

Control of Venereal Disease.

There are two physicians located and practicing in Multnomah. In addition to these, many physicians who have their offices in Portland supply medical care to the people of the community. It is the duty of these physicians to report all cases of venereal disease. Some cases are reported, many are not. Aside from any influence the physician might have on the prevention of venereal disease there is no attempt made, locally, to curb the spread of venereal infection. The community does not have houses of prostitution, as such, but as in all communities there is more or less promiscuous sex relation with its consequent proportion of subsequent venereal disease. Some of the new cases are definitely of local origin while many of them are imported or brought back from other centers of population. As with many other infectious diseases it is impossible to arrive at an accurate estimate of the number of new cases in a given period of time.

Control of Milk Supply.

Legal provisions for the control of purity of milk supply are made by the state, there being no local body having authority to regulate such matters. The laws are fully adequate and are enforced in an efficient manner.

There have been no indictments, prosecutions or convictions for violation of laws concerning the milk supply, within recent years.

There are three major dairies supplying the community. There are innumerable smaller dairies entering the field from time to time. The latter do not stay long because they soon find it difficult to compete with the larger dairies or they find a better market elsewhere.

The larger, more permanent, dairies are owned and operated by Swiss people who are a very thrifty, frugal people. They are of themselves clean and need no help in conducting their business. They well understand that clean fresh rich milk demands a higher price than does other milk and since

They are in the dairy business for the profits they can reap they produce a quality of milk that is always in demand. They employ all methods which will tend toward a product of highest quality.

Utensils are steam sterilized. Milk is delivered within the intervals between milking times so that if a consumer buys directly from the dairy man he receives milk that is less than twelve hours old. Employees are not thoroly examined periodically.

All cows are tuberculin tested twice each year and all giving a positive reaction are disposed of.

Until recently it was impossible to buy pasteurized milk in Multnomah. The raw milk delivered to the costumer, by the dairy, has a remarkably low bacterial count. Even the raw milk purchased at the stores quite consistently has a lower bacterial count than does the pasteurized milk now obtained at the same stores. The pasteurized milk is not of local origin but is brought from creameries in Portland.

Control of Food Stuff.

Until very recently all but one establishments, a lunch counter, handling foods were operating daily, retailing groceries, meats, bakery goods, prepared meals, confections etc under conditions quite acceptable even the most discriminating individual. These establishments were kept clean grossly and the personnel attending them were clean and healthy.

The one exception, the lunch counter, a place of moderate size, selling meals, tobacco, confections, bakery goods and some grocery items has recently been closed by creditors. The proprietor of this place was an elderly individual who as his age advanced became filthy both in person and habits as well as in his surroundings. The kitchen at this place was continuously filthy and was infested by cockroaches; rats and mice were frequently seen there. The pots, pans and other utensils were seldom washed and then only carelessly washed. Foods were displayed without protection from flies or dust. This place remained open for business

Barber Shops and Beauty Parlors.

There are three barber shops and one beauty parlor. Each establishment is supervised by the state laws regulating and examining beauty operators and barbers.

A clean towel is used for each patron. Scissors, combs, brushes and such instruments are not sterilized each time used, however. The premises are not palatial yet they are clean and tidy. The shops have no back rooms to obscure accumulated rubbish or other obnoxious articles.

Public Toilet Facilities: etc.

There are three service stations and one garage maintaining toilet facilities. The toilets provided at the service stations are relatively clean, they are not nicely so but are more nearly clean than is the average toilet found at a service station. The toilet at the garage is primarily for the workmen there, it is, however, available to the male population of the community. This toilet is a typical one of the variety found generally in garages. The proprietor of the garage sprinkles chlorinated lime about

the room when the odor becomes too offensive.

Control of Water Supply.

The community was furnished with water from wells on the individual properties until 1916 when facilities were installed for the distribution of Bull Run water. The business involved in purchasing and distributing the water and in maintaining equipment and in enlarging the area served is cared for by a Board of Directors of the local water district.

The system consists of one reservoir fed by a main from one of the nearby reservoirs in Portland, together with such mains and laterals there from to cover the district. The supply of water is of known quality since it is purchased from the city of Portland and is derived from the same source as the water used within the limits of Portland. The water meets the same standards of purity as does the water of the city. Since the water is purchased from the city of Portland and since it is from the same source equipment for purifying the water is not at hand.

Control of Excreta Disposal.

There is no definite system involved in the removal of sewage from the community. Most of the homes have inside toilets with flush tanks. These are connected with a septic tank on the property. Over flow from the septic tanks and surface drainage is carried off by suitably located ditches and by an occasional short, small, superficial clay tile or galvanized iron sewer. The natural surface contour is used to advantage in surface drainage.

General Sanitation.

Nuisances in general are handled, as reported, by the personnel of the office of the sheriff of Multnomah County. There are no local laws or ordinances covering nuisances.

Garbage and other refuse matter is disposed of at the discretion of the individual resident. There are garbage collectors who ply their trade both in Multnomah and in Portland who for a definite fee remove garbage at fixed intervals. The endeavor of these men together

with the desire of the individual resident to have his property clean leads to quite efficient disposal of garbage. There is no local supervision of garbage disposal.

The garbage is collected in the usual manner, some of the trucks having closed beds while others are open. The garbage is taken to nearby dumps where it is covered with earth.

Stable manure is handled in two ways. If the amount is small it is stored in a pile or in bins and is then spread on the ground in the fall of the year. If the amount is quite large it is stored in buildings or sheds erected especially for the purpose. Some of the larger dairies have large concrete buildings in which tons of manure is stored until the sale of it is quite profitable.

The cleaning of the streets is left to the individual desire to have his portion of the street clean; and to the elements.

Average Family.

Ages	28 yrs	24 yrs.	19 months.
sex.	male	female	female.
Occupation	laborer.	housewife	child.
Nativity	U.S.	U.S.	U.S.
Length Residence	9 yrs.	24 yrs.	19 months
Diseases	measles whooping cough.	measles Diphtheria Mumps.	none.
Present Illness	none	none	none.

Family Physician - yes. - local physician.

sanitary conditions about home - excellent.

Economic status. wage earner average monthly income \$95.00

Water Supply - Bull Run water.

Milk Supply - Raw milk delivered daily 1 quart. Canned milk in variable quantity for cooking. Dairyman - Dan Frutiger.

Raw foods purchased as needed from fresh supply at grocery store and meat market.

Condition of premises, - good.

Water flush toilet connected with septic tank the outlet

empties into small gully in back yard.

Garbage collected once each week by regular collector.

Eating Places and Soda Fountains.

There are three soda fountains and one restaurant in Multnomah. Two of the soda fountains are in drug stores while the third fountain is a portion of the restaurant. Dishes and utensils are cleansed by washing them in hot soap water and then wiped or allowed to drain dry.

The water is from the general supply. Each establishment is equipped with mechanical refrigerating devices. Foods are protected from flies and dust.

The food handlers are not regularly examined.

General sanitary conditions are excellent.

Conclusions.

The community commonly designated as Multnomah is a suburban community of indeterminate size and population because it is not an incorporated village.

Statistics cannot be obtained which apply directly to the community because of the elasticity of its boundaries and because of its proximity to Portland. Organized public health activities are at a low ebb in this community because there is no form of local government, but public opinion together with county and state public health activities fairly well controls the situation. Many practices, not required by law, are followed locally because of personal pride or because of examples set by nearby Portland.

The community as a whole is quite clean and sanitary, it however has its share of acute and chronic illnesses. It is favored in many respects by being a suburban residential district for a wage earning group of people. It is handicapped, greatly, in not being endowed with local self government.